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THERE AND BACK

BY

GEORGE MACDONALD

Author of
"WARLOCK O' GLENWARLOCK," "DONAL GRANT,"
"ANNALS OF A QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD,"
and others

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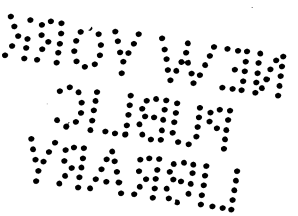

NOTE.

Some of the readers of this tale will be glad to know that the passage with which it ends is a real dream; and that, with but three or four changes almost too slight to require acknowledging, I have given it word for word as the friend to whom it came set it down for me.

ПЕРМСЬКА
ОБЛАСНА
НАУКОВА
БІБЛІОТЕКА

In the sure hope of ever lasting brotherhood, I offer this book to Ronald MacDonald, my son and friend, my pupil, fellow-student, and fellow-workman.

BORDIGHERA:
February, 1891.

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THERE AND BACK.

CHAPTER I.

FATHER, CHILD, AND NURSE.

It would be but stirring a muddy pool to inquire—not what motives induced, but what forces compelled Sir Wilton Lestrange to marry a woman nobody knew. It is enough to say that these forces were mainly ignoble, as manifested by their intermittent character and final cessation. The *mesalliance* occasioned not a little surprise, and quite as much annoyance, among the county families,—failing, however, to remind any that certain of their own grandmothers had been no better known to the small world than Lady Lestrange. It caused yet more surprise, though less annoyance, in the clubs to which Sir Wilton had hitherto been indebted for help to forget his duties: they set him down as a greater idiot than his friends had hitherto imagined him. For had he not been dragged to the altar by a woman whose manners and breeding were hardly on the level of a villa in St. John's Wood? Did any one know whence she sprang, or even the name which Sir Wilton had displaced with his own? But Sir Wilton himself was not proud of his lady; and if the thing had been any business of theirs, it would have made no difference to him; he would none the less have let them pine

in their ignorance. Did not his mother, a lady less dignified than eccentric, out of pure curiosity, beg enlightenment concerning her origin, and receive for answer from the high-minded baronet, "Madam, the woman is my wife!"—after which the prudent dowager asked no more questions, but treated her daughter-in-law with neither better nor worse than civility. Sir Wilton, in fact, soon came to owe his wife a grudge that he had married her, and none the less that at the time he felt himself of a generosity more than human in bestowing upon her his name. Creation itself, had he ever thought of it, would have seemed to him a small thing beside such a gift! The *mesalliance* was the fruitage of but a momentary passion. Springing up suddenly, it as suddenly died away, dropping from a loveless attraction to coldness and positive hatred.

And what of the woman who was at once the lure and the victim of this union without heart? That Robina Armour, after experience of his first advances, should have at last consented to marry Sir Wilton Lestrange, was in no sense in her favor, although after a fashion she was in love with him—in love, that is, with the gentleman of her own imagining whom she saw in the baronet; while the baronet, on his part, was what he called *in love* with what he called *the woman.* As he was overcome by her beauty, so was she by his rank—an idol at whose clay feet is cast many a spiritual birthright—and as mean a deity as any of man's device. But the blacksmith's daughter was in many respects, notwithstanding, a woman of good sense, with much real refinement, and a genuine regard for rectitude. Although Sir Wilton had never loved her with what

was best in him, it was not in spite of what was best in him that he fell in love with her. Had his better nature been awake, it would have justified the bond, and been strengthened by it.

Lady Lestrange's father was a good blacksmith, occasionally drunk in his youth, but persistently sober now in his middle age; a long-headed fellow, with reach and quality in the prudence which had long ceased to appear to him the highest of virtues. At one period he had accounted it the prime duty of existence to take care of oneself; and so much of this belief had he communicated to his younger daughter, that she deported herself so that Sir Wilton married her—with the result that, when Death knocked at her door, she welcomed him to her heart. The first cry of her child, it is true, made her recall the welcome, but she had to go with him, notwithstanding, when the child was but an hour old.

Not one of her husband's family was in the house when she died. Sir Wilton himself was in town, and had been for the last six months, preferring London and his club to Mortgrange and his wife. When a telegram informed him that she was in danger, he did go home, but when he arrived, she had been an hour gone, and he congratulated himself that he had taken the second train.

There had been betwixt them no approach to union. When what Sir Wilton called love had evaporated, he returned to his mire, with a resentful feeling that the handsome woman—his superior in everything that belongs to humanity—had bewitched him to his undoing. The truth was, she had ceased to charm him. The fault was not in her; it lay in the dulled eye of the swiftly deteriorating man, which

grew less and less capable of seeing things as they were, and transmitted falser and falser impressions of them. The light that was in him was darkness. The woman that might have made a man of him, had there been the stuff, passed from him an unprized gift, a thing to which he made Hades welcome.

It was decent, however, not to parade his relief. He retired to the library, lit a cigar, and sat down to wish the unpleasant fuss of the funeral over, and the house rid of a disagreeable presence. Had the woman died of a disease to which he might himself one day have to succumb, her death might, as he sat there, have chanced to raise for an instant the watery ghost of an emotion; but, coming as it did, he had no sympathetic interest in her death any more than in herself. Lolling in the easiest of chairs, he revolved the turns of last night's play, until it occurred to him that he might soon by a second marriage take amends of his neighbors for their disapprobation of his first. So pleasant was the thought that, brooding upon it, he fell asleep.

He woke, looked, rubbed his eyes, stared, rubbed them again, and stared. A woman stood in front of him—one he had surely seen!—no, he had never seen her anywhere! What an odd, inquiring, searching expression in her two hideous black eyes! And what was that in her arms—something wrapt in a blanket?

The message in the telegram recurred to him: there must have been a child! The bundle must be the child! Confound the creature! What did it want?

"Go away," he said; "this is not the nursery!"

"I thought you might like to look at the baby, sir!" the woman replied.

Sir Wilton stared at the blanket.

"It might comfort you, I thought!" she went on, with a look he felt to be strange. Her eyes were hard and dry, red with recent tears, and glowing with suppressed fire.

Sir Wilton was courteous to most women, especially such as had no claim upon him, but cherished respect for none. It was odd therefore that he should now feel embarrassed. From some cause the machinery of his self-content had possibly got out of gear; anyhow no answer came ready. He had not the smallest wish to see the child, but was yet, perhaps, unwilling to appear brutal. In the meantime, the woman, with gentle, moth-like touch, was parting and turning back the folds of the blanket, until from behind it dawned a tiny human face, whose angel was suppliant, it may be, for the baptism of a father's first gaze.

The woman held out the child to Sir Wilton, as if expecting him to take it. He started to his feet, driving the chair a yard behind him, stuck his hands in his pockets, and, with a face of disgust, cried—

"Take the creature away!"

But he could not lift his eyes from the face nested in the blanket. It seemed to fascinate him. The woman's eyes flared, but she did not speak.

"Uglier than sin!" he half hissed, half growled. "—I suppose the animal is mine, but you needn't bring it so close to me! Take it away—and keep it away. I will send for it when I want it—which won't be in a hurry! Pfaugh! how hideous a thing may be, and yet human!"

"He is as God made him!" remarked the nurse, quietly for very wrath.

"Or the devil!" suggested his father.

Then the woman looked like a tigress. She opened her mouth, but closed it again with a snap.

"I may say what I like of my own!" said the father. "Tell me the goblin is none of mine, and I will be as respectful to him as you please. Prove it, and I will give you fifty pounds. He's ugly! He's hideous! Deny it if you can."

The woman held her peace. She could not, even to herself, call him a child pleasant to look at. She gazed on him for a moment with pitiful, protective eyes, then covered his face as if he were dead. But she did not move.

"Why don't you go?" said the baronet.

Instead of replying, she began, as by a suddenly confirmed resolve, to remove the coverings at the other end of the bundle, and presently disclosed the baby's feet. The baronet gazed wondering. To what might not assurance be about to subject him? She took one of the little feet in a hard but gentle hand, and spreading out "the pink, five-beaded baby-toes," displayed what even the inexperience of the baronet could not but recognize as remarkable: between every pair of toes was stretched a thin, delicate membrane. She laid the foot down, took up the other, and showed the same peculiarity. The child was web-footed, as distinctly as any properly constituted duckling! Then she lifted, one after the other, the tiny hands, beautiful to any eye that understood, and showed between the middle and third finger of each, the same sort of membrane rising half-way to the points of them.

"I see!" said the baronet, with a laugh that was not nice, having in it no merriment, "the creature is a monster!—Well, if you think I am to blame, I can only protest you are mistaken. *I* am not web-footed! The duckness must come from the other side."

"I hope you will remember, Sir Wilton!"

"Remember? What do you mean? Take the monster away."

The woman rearranged the coverings of the little crooked legs.

"Won't you look at your lady before they put her in her coffin?" she said when she had done.

"What good would that do her? She's past caring!—No, I won't: why should I? Such sights are not pleasant."

"The coffin's a lonely chamber, Sir Wilton; lonely to lie all day and all night in!"

"No lonelier for one than for another!" he replied, with an involuntary recoil from his own words. For the one thing a man must believe—yet hardly believes—is, that he shall one day die. "She'll be better without *me*, anyhow!"

"You are heartless, Sir Wilton!"

"Mind your own business. If I choose to be heartless, I may have my reasons. Take the child away."

Still she did not move. The baby, young as he was, had thrown the blanket from his face, and the father's eyes were fixed on it; while he gazed the nurse would not stir. He seemed fascinated by its ugliness. Without absolute deformity, the child was indeed as unsightly as infant well could be.

"My God!" he said again—for he had a trick of

crying out as if he had a God—"the little brute hates me! Take it away, woman. Take it away before I strangle it! I can't answer for myself if it keeps on looking at me!"

With a glance whose mingled anger and scorn the father did not see, the nurse turned and went.

He kept staring after her till the door shut, then fell back into his chair, exclaiming once more, "My God!"—What or whom he meant by the word, it were hard to say.

"Is it possible," he said to himself, "that the fine woman I married—for she *was* a fine woman, a deuced fine woman!—should have died to present the world with such a travesty! It's like nothing human! It's an affront to the family! Ah! the strain *will* show! They say your sins will find you out! It was a sin to marry the woman! What a fool I was! But she bewitched me! I *was* bewitched.—Curse the little monster! I shan't breathe again till I'm out of the house! Where was the doctor? He ought to have seen to it! Hang it all, I'll go abroad!"

Ugly as the child was, however, to many an eye the first thing evident in him would have been his strong likeness to his father—whose features were perfect, though at the moment, and at many a moment, their expression was other than attractive. Sir Wilton disliked children, and the dislike was mutual. Never did child run to him; never was child unwilling to leave him. Escaping from his grasp, he would turn and look back, like Christian emerging from the Valley of the Shadow, as if to weigh the peril he had been in.

As tenderly as if he had been the loveliest of God's

children, the woman bore her charge up staircases, and through corridors and passages, to the remote nursery, where, in a cradle whose gay furniture contrasted sadly with the countenance of the child and the fierceness of her own eyes, she gently laid him down. But long after he was asleep, she continued to bend over him, as if with difficulty restraining herself from clasping him again to her bosom.

There was a dramatic fitness even in the selection of this outspoken nurse who was now the baby's only protector. For she was the child's aunt.

Jane Tuke had been married four or five years, but had no children, and the lack seemed to have intensified her maternity. Elder sister to Lady Lestrange, she had gone gladly to receive her child in her arms, and had watched and waited for it with an expectation far stronger than that of the mother; for so thorough was Lady Lestrange's disappointment in her husband, that she regarded the advent of his child almost with indifference. Jane had an absolute passion for children. She had married a quarter for faith, a quarter for love, and a whole half for hope. This divinely inexplicable child-passion is as unintelligible to those devoid of it, as its absence is marvellous to those possessed by it. Its presence is its justification, its being its sole explanation, itself its highest reason. Surely on those who cherish it, the shadow of the love-creative God must rest more than on some other women! Unpleasing as was the infant, to know him her own would have made the world a paradise to Jane. Her heart burned with divine indignation at the wrongs already heaped upon him. Hardly born, he was persecuted! Ugly! he was *not* ugly! Was he not come straight from the

fountain of life, from the Father of children! That such a father as she had left in the library should repudiate him was well! She loved to think of his rejection. She brooded with delight, in the midst of her wrath, on every word of disgust that had fallen from his unfatherly lips. The more her baby was rejected, the more he was hers! He belonged to her, and her only, for she only loved him! She could say with *France* in *King Lear*, "Be it lawful I take up what's cast away!" To her the despised one was the essence of all riches. The joy of a miser is less than the joy of a mother, as gold is less than a live soul, as greed is less than love. No vision of jewels ever gave such a longing as this woman longed with after the child of her dead sister.

The body that bore was laid in the earth, the thing born was left upon it. The mother had but come, exposed her infant on the rough shore of time, and forsaken him in his nakedness. There he lay, not knowing whence he came, or whither he was going, urged to live by a hunger and thirst he had not invented, and did not understand. His mother had helplessly forsaken him, but the God in another woman had taken him up: there was a soul to love him, two arms to carry him, and a strong heart to shelter him.

Sir Wilton returned to London, and there enjoyed himself—not much, but a little the more that no woman sat at Mortgrange with a right to complain that he took his pleasure without her. He lived the life of the human animals frequenting the society of their kind from a gregarious instinct, and for common yet opposing self-ends. He had begun to assume the staidness, if not dullness, of the animal whose

first youth has departed, but he was only less frolicsome, not more human. He was settling down to what he had made himself; no virtue could claim a share in the diminished rampancy of his vices. What a society is that which will regard as reformed the man whom assuaging fires have left an exhausted slag—a thing for which as yet no use is known! who suggests no promise of change or growth, gives no poorest hint of hope concerning his fate!

With the first unrecognized sense of approaching age, a certain habit of his race began to affect him, and the idea of a quieter life, with a woman whose possession would make him envied, grew mildly attractive. A brilliant marriage in another county would, besides, avenge him on the narrow-minded of his own, who had despised his first choice! With judicial family-eye he surveyed the eligible women of his acquaintance. It was, no doubt, to his disadvantage that already an heir lay "mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;" for a woman who might willingly be mother to the inheritor of such a property as his, might not find attractive the notion of her first being her husband's second son. But slips between cups and lips were not always on the wrong side! Such a moon-calf as Robina's son could not with justice represent the handsomest man and one of the handsomest women of their time. The heir that fate had palmed upon him might very well be doomed to go the way so many infants went!

He spread the report that the boy was sickly. A notion that he was not likely to live prevailed about Mortgrange, which, however originated, was nourished doubtless by the fact that he was so seldom

seen. In reality, however, there was not a healthier child in all England than Richard Lestrange.

Sir Wilton's relations took as little interest in the heir as himself, and there was no inducement for any of them to visit Mortgrange; the aunt-mother, therefore, had her own way with him. She was not liked in the house. The servants said she cared only for the little toad of a baronet, and would do nothing for her comfort. They had, however, just a shadow of respect for her: if she encouraged no familiarity, she did not meddle, and was independent of their aid. Even the milking of the cow which had been, through her persistence, set apart for the child, she did herself. She sought no influence in the house, and was nothing loved and little heeded.

Sir Wilton had not again seen his heir, who was now almost a year old, when the rumor reached Mortgrange that the baronet was about to be married.

Naturally, the news was disquieting to Jane. The hope, however, was left her, that the stepmother might care as little for the child as did the father, and that so, for some years at least, he might be left to her. It was a terrible thought to the loving woman that they might be parted; a more terrible thought that her baby might become a man like his father. Of all horrors to a decent woman, a bad man must be the worst! If by her death she could have left the child her hatred of evil, Jane would have willingly died: she loved her husband, but her sister's boy was in danger!

CHAPTER II.

STEPMOTHER AND NURSE.

THE rumor of Sir Wilton's marriage was, as rumor seldom is, correct. Before the year was out, Lady Ann Hardy, sister to the Earl of Torpavy, representing an old family with a drop or two of very bad blood in it, became Lady Ann Lestrange. How much love there may have been in the affair, it is unnecessary to inquire, seeing the baronet was what he was, and the lady understood the *what* pretty well. She might have preferred a husband not so much what Sir Wilton was, but she was nine-and-twenty, and her brother was poor. She said to herself, I suppose, that she might as well as another undertake his reform: some one must! and married him. She had not much of a trousseau, but was gorgeously attired for the wedding. It is true she had to return to the Earl three-fourths of the jewels she wore; but they were family jewels, and why should she not have some good of them? She started with fifty pounds of her own in her pocket, and a demeanor in her person equal to fifty millions. When they arrived at Mortgrange, the moon was indeed still in the sky, but the honey-pot, to judge by the appearance of the twain, was empty: twain they were, and twain would be. The man wore a look of careless all-rightness, tinged with an expression of indifferent triumph: he had

what he wanted; what his lady might think of her side of the bargain, he neither thought nor cared. As to the woman, let her reflections be what they might, not a soul would come to the knowledge of them. Whatever it was to others, her pale, handsome face was never false to herself, never betrayed what she was thinking, never broke the shallow surface of its frozen dignity. Will any man ever know how a woman of ordinary decency feels after selling herself? I find the thing hardly safe to ponder. No trace, no shadow of disappointment clouded the countenance of Lady Ann that sultry summer afternoon as she drove up the treeless avenue. The education she had received—and education in the worst sense it was! for it had brought out the worst in her—had rendered her less than human. The form of her earthly presence had been trained to a fashionable perfection; her nature had not been left unaided in its reversion toward the vague animal type from which it was developed: in the curve of her thin lips as they prepared to smile, one could discern the veiled snarl and bite. Her eyes were gray, her eyebrows dark; her complexion was a clear fair, her nose perfect, except for a sharp pinch at the end of the bone; her nostrils were thin but motionless; her chin was defective, and her throat as slender as her horrible waist; her hands and feet were large even for "her tall personage."

After his lady had had a cup of tea, Sir Wilton, for something to do, proposed taking her over the house, which was old, and worthy of inspection. In their progress they came to a door at the end of a long and rather tortuous passage. Sir Wilton did not know how the room was occupied, or he would doubtless have

passed it by; but as its windows gave a fine view of the park, he opened the door, and Lady Ann entered. Sudden displeasure shortened her first step; pride or something worse lengthened the next, as she bore down on a woman too much occupied with a child on her knee to look up at the sound of her entrance. When, a moment after, she did look up, the dreaded stepmother was looking straight down on her baby. Their eyes encountered. Jane met an icy stare, and Lady Ann a gaze of defiance—an expression by this time almost fixed on the face of the nurse, for in her spirit she heard every unspoken remark on her child. Not a word did the lady utter, but to Jane, her eyes, her very breath, seemed to say with scorn, "Is *that* the heir?" Sir Wilton did not venture a single look: he was ashamed of his son, and already a little afraid of his wife, whom he had once seen close her rather large teeth in a notable way. As she turned toward the window, however, he stole a glance at his offspring: the creature was not quite so ugly as before—not quite so repulsive as he had pictured him! But, good heavens! he was on the lap of the same woman whose fierceness had upset him almost as much as his child's ugliness! He walked to the window after his wife. She gazed for a moment, turned with indifference, and left the room. Her husband followed her. A glance of fear, dislike and defiance went after them from Jane.

Stronger contrast than those two women it would be hard to find. Jane's countenance was almost coarse, but its rugged outline was almost grand. Her hair grew low down on her forehead, and she had deep-set eyes. Her complexion was rough, her nose large and thick. Her mouth was large also, but,

when unaffected by her now almost habitual antagonism, the curve of her lip was sweet, and occasionally humorous. Her chin was strong, and the total of her face what we call masculine; but when she silently regarded her child, it grew beautiful with the radiant tenderness of protection.

Her visitors left the door open behind them; Jane rose and shut it, sat down again, and gazed motionless at the infant. Perhaps he vaguely understood the sorrow and dread of her countenance, for he pulled a long face of his own, and was about to cry. Jane clasped him to her bosom in an agony; she felt certain she would not long be permitted to hold him there. In the silent speech of my lady's mouth, her jealous love saw the doom of her darling. What precise doom she dared not ask herself; it was more than enough that she, indubitably his guardian as if sent from heaven to shield him, must abandon him to his natural enemy, one who looked upon him as the adversary of her own children. It was a thought not to be thought, an idea for which there should be no place in her bosom! Unfathomable as the love between man and woman is the love of woman to child.

She spent a wakeful night. From the decree of banishment sure to go forth against her, there was no appeal! Go she must! Yet her heart cried out that he was her own. In the same lap his mother had lain before him! She had carried her by day, and at night folded her in the same arms, herself but six years old—old enough to remember yet the richness unspeakable of her new possession. Never had come difference betwixt them until Robina began to give ear to Sir Wilton, whom Jane could not endure.

When she responded, as she did at once, to her sister's cry for her help, she made her promise that no one should understand who she was, but that she should in the house be taken for and treated as a hired nurse. Why Jane stipulated thus, it were hard to say, but so careful were they both, that no one at Mortgrange suspected the nurse as personally interested in the ugly heir left in her charge! No one dreamed that the child's aunt had forsaken her husband to nurse him, and was living *for* him day and night. She, in her turn, had promised her sister never to leave him, and this pledge strengthened the bond of her passion. The only question was *how* she was to be faithful to her pledge, *how* to carry matters when she was turned away. With those thin, close-pressed lips in her mind's eye, she could not count on remaining where she was beyond a few days.

She was not only a woman capable of making up her mind, but a woman of resource, with the advantage of having foreseen and often pondered the possibility of that which was now imminent. The same night, silent above the sleep of her darling, she sat at work with needle and scissors far into the morning, remodelling an old print dress. For nights after, she was similarly occupied, though not a scrap or sign of the labor was visible in the morning.

The crisis anticipated came within a fortnight. Lady Ann did not show herself a second time in the nursery, but sending for Jane, informed her that an experienced nurse was on her way from London to take charge of the child, and her services would not be required after the next morning.

"For, of course," concluded her ladyship, "I could

not expect a woman of your years to take an under-nurse's place!"

"Please, your ladyship, I will gladly," said Jane, eager to avoid or at least postpone the necessity forcing itself upon her.

"I intend you to go—and *at once*," replied her ladyship; "—that is, the moment Mrs. Thornycroft arrives. The housekeeper will take care that you have your month's wages in lieu of warning."

"Very well, my lady!—Please, your ladyship, when may I come and see the child?"

"Not at all. There is no necessity."

"Never, my lady?"

"Decidedly."

"Then at least I may ask why you send me away so suddenly!"

"I told you that I want a properly qualified nurse to take your place. My wish is to have the child more immediately under my own eye than would be agreeable if you kept your place. I hope I speak plainly!"

"Quite, my lady."

"And let me, for your own sake, recommend you to behave more respectfully when you find another place."

What she was doing Lady Ann was incapable of knowing. A woman love-brooding over a child is at the gate of heaven; to take her child from her is to turn her away from more than paradise.

Jane went in silence, seeming to accept the inevitable, too proud to wipe away the tear whose rising she could not help—a tear not for herself, nor yet for the child, but for the dead mother in whose place she left such a woman. She walked slowly back to

the nursery, where her charge was asleep, closed the door, sat down by the cot, and sat for a while without moving. Then her countenance began to change, and slowly went on changing, until at last, as through a mist of troubled emotion, out upon the strong, rugged face broke, with strange suggestion of a sunset, the glow of resolve and justified desire. A maid more friendly than the rest brought her some tea, but Jane said nothing of what had occurred. When the child awoke, she fed him, and played with him a long time—till he was thoroughly tired, when she undressed him, and laying him down, set about preparing his evening meal. No one could have perceived in her any difference, except indeed it were a subdued excitement in her glowing eyes. When it was ready, she went to her box, took from it a small bottle, and poured a few dark-colored drops into the food.

"God forgive me! it's but this once!" she murmured.

The child seemed not quite to relish his supper, but did not refuse it, and was presently asleep in her arms. She laid him down, took a book, and began to read.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLIGHT.

She read until every sound had died in the house, every sound from garret to cellar, except the ticking of clock, and the tinkling cracks of sinking fires and cooling grates. In the regnant silence she rose, laid aside her book, softly opened the door, and stepped as softly into the narrow passage. A moment or two she listened, then stole on tiptoe to the main corridor, and again listened. She went next to the head of the great stair, and once more stood and listened. Then she crept down to the drawing-room, saw that there was no light in the library, billiard-room or smoking-room, and with stealthy feet returned to the nursery. There she closed the door she had left open, and took the child. He lay in her arms like one dead. She removed everything he wore, and dressed him in the garments which for the last fortnight she had been making for him from clothes of her own. When she had done, he looked like any cottager's child; there was nothing in his face to contradict his attire. She regarded the result for a moment with a triumph of satisfaction, laid him down, and proceeded to put away the clothes he had worn.

Over the top of the door was a small cupboard in the wall, into which she had never looked until the day before, when she opened it and found it empty.

She placed a table under it, and a chair on the table, climbed up, laid in it everything she had taken off the child, locked the door of it, put the key in her pocket, and got down. Then she took the cloak and hood he had hitherto worn out of doors, laid them down beside the wardrobe, and lifting the end of it with a strength worthy of the blacksmith's daughter, pushed them with her foot into the hollow between the bottom of the wardrobe and the floor of the room. This done, she looked at the time-piece on the mantelshelf, saw it was one o'clock, and sat down to recover her breath. But the next moment she was on her knees, sobbing. By and by she rose, wiped the hot tears from her eyes, and went carefully about the room, gathering up this and that, and putting it into her box. Then having locked it, she stuffed a number of small pieces of paper into the lock, using a crochet-needle to get them well among the wards. Lastly, she put on a dress she had never worn at Mortgrange, took up the child, who was still in a dead sleep, wrapped him in an old shawl, and stole with him from the room.

Like those of a thief—or murderess rather, her scared eyes looked on this side and that, as she crept to a narrow stair that led to the kitchen. She knew every turn and every opening in this part of the house: for weeks she had been occupied, both intellect and imagination, with the daring idea she was now carrying into effect.

She reached the one door that might yield a safe exit, unlocked it noiselessly, and stood in a little paved yard with a pump, whence another door in an ivy-covered wall opened into the kitchen-garden.

[illegible] kitchen-garden, whence a back-walk led to a gate over which she could climb so to reach the highway, along whose lonely moon-hallowed stretches she must walk miles and miles before she could even hope herself safe.

She stood at length in the broad moonlight on the white, far-reaching road. Her heart beat so fast as almost to stifle her. She dared not look down at the child, lest some one should see her and look also! The moon herself had an aspect of suspicion. Why did she keep staring so? For an instant she wished herself back in the nursery. But she knew it would only be to do it all over again: it *had* to be done! Leave the child of her sister where he was counted in the way! with those who hated him! where his helpless life was in danger! She could not!

But, while she thought, she did not stand. Swiftly, with great strides she went stalking along the road. She knew the country: she was not many miles from her father's forge, whence at moments she seemed to hear the ring of his hammer through the still night.

She kept to the road for three or four miles, then turned aside on a great moor stretching far to the south: daybreak was coming fast; she must find some cottage or natural shelter, lest the light should

betray her. When the sun had made his round, and yielded his place to the friendly night, she would start afresh! In her bundle she had enough for the baby; for herself, she could hold out many hours unfed. A few more miles from Mortgrange, and no one would know her! neither from any possible description could they be suspected in the garments they wore! Her object in hiding their usual attire had been that it might be taken for granted they had gone away in it.

She did not slacken her pace till she had walked five miles more. Then she stood a moment, and gazed about her. The great heath was all around, solitary as the heaven out of which the solitary moon, with no child to comfort her, was enviously watching them. But she would not stop to rest, save for the briefest breathing space! On and on she went until moorland miles five more, as near as she could judge, were behind her. Then at length she sat down upon a stone, and a timid flutter of safety stirred in her bosom, followed by a gush of love victorious. Her treasure! her treasure! Not once on the long way had she looked at him. Now she folded back the shawl, and gazed as not even a lover could have gazed on the sleeping countenance of his rescued bride. The passion of no other possession could have equalled the intensity of her conscious *having*. Not one created being had a right to the child but herself!—yet any moment he might be taken from her by a cold-hearted, cruel stepmother, and given to a hired woman! She started to her feet, and hurried on. The boy was no light weight, and she had things to carry besides, which her love said he could not do without; yet before seven

o'clock she had cleared some sixteen miles, in a line from Mortgrange as straight as she could keep.

She thought she must now be near a village whose name she knew ; but she dared not show herself lest some advertisement might reach it after she was gone, and lead to the discovery of the route she had taken. She turned aside therefore into an old quarry, there to spend the day, unvisited of human soul. The child was now awake, but still drowsy. She gave him a little food, and ate the crust she had saved from her tea the night before. During the long hours she slept a good deal by fits, and when the evening came, was quite fit to resume her tramp. To her joy it came cloudy, giving her courage to enter a little shop she saw on the outskirts of the village, and buy some milk and some bread. From this point she kept the road : she might now avail herself of help from cart or wagon. She was not without money, but feared the railway.

It is needless to follow her wanderings, always toward London, where was her husband, and her home. A weary, but happy, and almost no longer an anxious woman, she reached at length a certain populous suburb, and was soon in the arms of her husband.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOOKBINDER AND HIS PUPIL.

It was the middle of the day before they were missed. Their absence caused for a time no commotion; the servants said nurse must have taken the child for his usual walk. But when the nurse from London came, and, after renewed search and inquiry, nothing was heard of them, their disappearance could no longer be kept from Lady Ann. She sent to inform her husband.

Sir Wilton asked a question or two of her messenger, said the thing must be seen to, finished his cigar, threw the stump in the fire, and went to his wife; when at once they began to discuss, not the steps to be taken for the recovery of the child, but the woman's motive for stealing him. The lady insisted it was revenge for having been turned away, and that she would, as soon as she reached a suitable place, put an end to his life: she had seen murder in her eyes! The father opined there was no such danger: he remembered, though he did not mention it, the peculiarity of the woman's behavior when first he saw her. There was no limit, he said, to the unnatural fancies of women; some were disgustingly fond of children, even of other women's children. Plain as the infant was, he did not doubt she had taken a fancy to him, and therefore declined to part with him. The element of revenge

might, he allowed, have a share in the deed; but that would be satisfied with leaving them in doubt of his fate. For his part, he made her welcome to him! To this Lady Ann gave no answer: she was not easily shocked, and could, without consternation, have regarded his disappearance as final. But something must at least appear to be done! Unpleasant things might be said, and uncertainty was full of annoyance!

"You must be careful, Sir Wilton," she remarked. "Nobody thinks you believe the child your own."

Sir Wilton laughed.

"I never had a doubt on the subject. I wish I had: he's not to my credit. If we never hear of him again, the better for the next!"

"That is true!" rejoined Lady Ann. "But what if, after we have forgotten all about him, he were to turn up again?"

"That would be unpleasant—and is indeed a reason why we should look for him. Better find him than live in doubt! Besides, the world would be uncharitable enough to hint that you had made away with him: it's what ought to have been done when first he appeared. I give you my word, Ann, he was a positive monster! The object was actually web-footed!—web-footed like any frog!"

"You must let the police know," said the lady.

"That the child is web-footed? No, I think not," yawned Sir Wilton.

He got up, went out, and ordered a groom to ride hard to the village—as hard as he could go—and let the police understand what had occurred. Within the hour a constable appeared, come to inquire when last the fugitives were seen, and what they wore—

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aunt; and whether the fact that she was none the less a poor woman standing up against the rich, would not render that or any plea unavailing. Jane was, and long remained, serenely hopeful.

When she left for Mortgrange, they had agreed that her husband should say she was gone to her father's; and as nobody where they lived knew who or where her father was, nobody had the end of any clue. For some time after her return she did not show herself, leaving it to her husband to say she had come back with her baby. Then she began to appear with the child, and so managed her references to her absence, that no one dreamed of his not being her own, or imagined that she had left her husband for other reason than to be tended at her old home in her confinement. After a few years, even the fact of his not having been born in that house was forgotten; and Richard Lestrange grew up as the son of John Tuke, the bookbinder. Not in any mind was there a doubt as to his parentage.

They lived on the very bank of the Thames, in a poor part of a populous, busy, thriving suburb, far from fashionable, yet not without inhabitants of refinement. Had not art and literature sent out a few suckers into it, there would have been no place in it for John Tuke. For, more than liking his trade, being indeed fond of it, he would not work for the booksellers, but used his talent to the satisfaction of known customers, of whom he had now not a few, for his reputation had spread beyond the near neighborhood. But while he worked cheaper, quality considered, than many binders, even carefully superintending that most important yet most neglected part of the handicraft, the sewing, he never under-

took cheap work. Never, indeed, without persuasion on the part of his employer and expostulation on his own, did he consent to *half-bind* a book. Hence it comes to be confessed, that, when *carte blanche* was given him, he would not infrequently expend upon a book an amount of labor and a value of material quite out of proportion to the importance of the book. Still, being a thoroughly conscientious workman, who never hurried the forwarding, never cut from a margin a hair's breadth more than was necessary, and hated finger-marks on the whiteness of a page, he was well known as such, and had plenty of work —had often, indeed, to refuse what was offered him, hence was able to decline all such jobs as would give him no pleasure, and grew more fastidious as he grew older in regard to the quality of the work he would undertake. He had never employed a journeyman, and would never take more than two apprentices at a time.

As Richard Lestrange grew, his chief pleasure was to be in the shop with his uncle, and watch him at his varying work. I think his knowledge of books as things led him the sooner to desire them as realities, for to read he learned with avidity. When he was old enough to go to school, his adoptive father spared nothing he could spend to make him fit for his future ; wisely resolved, however, that he should know nothing of his rights until he was of an age to understand them—except, indeed, Sir Wilton should die before that age arrived, when his cause would be too much prejudiced by farther postponement of claim. Heartily they hoped that their secret might remain a secret until their nephew should be capable

of protecting them from any untoward consequence of their well intended crime.

Happily there was in the place, and near enough for the boy to attend it easily, a good day-school upon an old foundation, whose fees were within his father's means. Richard proved a fair student and became a great reader. But he took such an intelligent and practical interest in the work he saw going on at home, that he began, while yet a mere child, to use paste and paper of his own accord. First he made manuscript-books for his work at school, and for the copying of such verses as he took a fancy to in his reading. Then inside the covers of some of these he would make pockets for papers; and so advanced to small portfolios and pocket-books, of which he would make presents to his companions and sometimes, when more ambitiously successful, to a master. In their construction he used bits of colored paper and scraps of leather, chiefly morocco, which his father willingly made over to him, watching his progress with an interest quite paternal, and showing a workman's wisdom in this, that only when he saw him in a real difficulty would he come to his aid—as, for instance, when first he struggled with a piece of leather too thick for the bonds of paste, and must be taught how to pare it to the necessary flexibility and compliance.

To become able to *make* something is, I think, necessary to thorough development. I would rather have son of mine a carpenter, a watchmaker, a wood-carver, a shoemaker, a jeweller, a blacksmith, a bookbinder, than I would have him earn his bread as a clerk in a counting-house. Not merely is the cultivation of operant faculty a better education in

faculty, but it brings the man nearer to everything operant; humanity unfolds itself to him the readier; its ways and thoughts and modes of being grow the clearer to both intellect and heart. The poetry of life, the inner side of that nature which comes from Him who, on the Sabbath-days even, "worketh hitherto," rises nearer the surface to meet the eyes of the man who *makes*. What advantage the carpenter of Nazareth gathered from his bench, is the inheritance of every workman, in proportion as he does divine, that is, honest work.

Perceiving the faculty of the boy, his father—so let us call John Tuke for the present—naturally thought it well to make him a gift of his trade: it would always be a possession! "Whatever turn things may take," he would remark to his wife, "the boy will have his bread in his hands. And say what they will, the man who can gather his food off his own bench, or screw it out of his own press, must be a freer man than he who but for his inheritance would have to beg, steal, or die of hunger. And who knows how long the world may permit idlers to fare of its best!"

For, after a fashion of his own, Tuke was a philosopher and a politician. But his politics were those of the philosopher, not of the politician.

Richard, with his great love of reading, and therefore of books, was delighted to learn the craft which is their attendant and servitor. When too young yet to wield the hammer without danger both to himself and the book under it, he began to sew, and in a few weeks was able to bring the sheets together entirely to the satisfaction of his father. From the first he set him to do that essential part of the work in

the best way, that is, to sew every sheet round every cord: it is only when one can perfectly work after the perfect rule, that he may be trusted with variations and exceptions.

He went on teaching him until the boy could, he confessed, do almost everything better than himself—went on until he had taught him every delicacy, every secret of the craft. Richard developed a positive genius for the work, seeming almost to learn it by intuition. A pocket-book, with which he presented his father on his fiftieth birthday, brought out his unqualified praise.

In the process he gradually revealed a predilection for a rarer use of his faculty—a use more nice, while less distinguished, and not much favored by his father. It had its prime source deeper than the art of bookbinding—in the love of books themselves, not as leaves to be bound, but as utterances to be heard. Certain dealers in old books have loved some of them so as to refuse to part with them on any terms; Richard, unable to possess more than a very few, manifested his veneration for them in another and nearer fashion, running, as was natural and healthy, in the lines of his calling.

For many months in diligent attendance at certain of the evening-classes at King's College, he had developed a true insight into and sympathy with what is best in our literature—chiefly in that of the sixteenth century: from this grew an almost peculiar regard for old books. With three or four shillings weekly at his disposal, he laid himself out to discover and buy such volumes as, in themselves of value, were in so bad a condition as to be of little worth from the mere bookseller's point of view: with

these for his first patients he opened a hospital, or angel-asylum, for the lodging, restorative treatment, and systematic invigoration of decayed volumes. Love and power combined made him look on the dilapidated, slow-wasting abodes of human thought and delight with a healing compassion—almost with a passion of healing. The worse gnawed of the tooth of insect-time, the farther down any choice book in the steep decline of years, the more intent was Richard on having it. More and more skilful he grew, not only in rebinding such whose clothing was past repair, but in restoring the tone of their very constitution; and in so mending the ancient and beggarly garments of others that they reassumed a venerable respectability. Through love he passed from an artisan to an artist. His reverence for the inner reality, the book itself, in itself beyond time and decay, had roused in him a child-like regard for its body, for its broken inclosure and default of manifestation. He would espy the beauty of an old binding through any amount of abrasion and laceration. To his eyes almost any old binding was better for its book than any new one.

His father came to regard with wonder and admiration the redeeming faculty of his son, whereby he would reinstate in strength and ripe dignity a volume which he would have taken to pieces, and re-dressed like an age-worn woman in a fashionable gown. So far did his son's superior taste work upon his, that at length, if he opened a new binding, however sombre, and saw a time-browned paper and old type within, the sight would give him the shock of a discord.

But Tuke was in many things no other than a man of this world, and sorely he doubted if such

labor would ever have its counterpoise in money. It paid better, because it was much easier, to reclothe than to restore! to destroy and replace than to renew! When he had watched many times for minutes together his son's delicate manipulation—in which he patched without pauperizing, and sub-aided without humiliating—and at last contemplated the finished result, he concluded him possessed of a quite original faculty for book-healing.—"But alas," he thought, "genius seldom gets beyond board-wages." It did not occur to him that genius least requires more than board wages. He encouraged him, nevertheless, though mildly, in the pursuit of this neglected branch of the binding-art.

As the days went on, and their love for their nephew grew with his deserts, the uncle and aunt shrank more and more from the thought, which every year compelled them to think the oftener, that the day was drawing nigh when they must volunteer the confession that he was not their child.

When he was about seventeen, Richard settled down to work with his father, occasionally assisting him, but in general occupied with his own special branch, in which Tuke, through his long connection with book-lovers possessing small cherished libraries, was able to bring him almost as many jobs as he could undertake. The fact that a volume could be so repaired, stimulated the purchase of shabby books; and part of what was saved on the price of a good copy was laid out on the amendment of the poor one. But however much the youth delighted in it, he could not but find the work fidgety and tiring; whence ensued the advantage that he left it the oftener for a ramble, or a solitary hour on the river. He had but

few companions, his guardians, wisely or not, being more fastidious about his associates than if he had been their very son. His uncle, of strong socialistic opinions, and wont to dilate on human equality—as if the thing that ought to be, and must one day come, could be furthered by the assertion of its present existence—was, like the holders of even higher theories, not a little apt to forget the practice necessarily involved: this son of a baronet, seeing that he was the son also of his wife's sister, was not to be brought up like one of the many!

Ugliness in infancy is a promise, though perhaps a doubtful one, of beauty in manhood; and in Richard's case the promise was fulfilled: hardly a hint was left of the baby-face which had repelled his father. He was now a handsome well-grown youth, with dark-brown hair, dark-green eyes, broad shoulders, and a little stoop which made his aunt uneasy: she would have had him join a volunteer corps, but he declared he had not the time. He accepted her encouragement, however, to forsake his work as often as he felt inclined. He had good health; what was better, a good temper; and, what was better still, a willing heart toward his neighbor. A certain overhanging of his brows was—especially when he contracted them, as, in perplexity or endeavor, he not infrequently did—called a scowl by such as did not love him; but it was of shallow significance, and probably the trick of some ancestor.

Before long, his thinking began to take form in verse-making. It matters little to my narrative whether he produced anything of original value or not; utterance aids growth, which is the prime necessity of human as of all other life. Not seldom, bent

over his work, he would be evolving some musical fashion of words—with no relaxation, however, of the sharp attention and delicate handling required by the nature of that work. It is the privilege of some kinds of labor, that they are compatible with thoughts of higher things. At the book-keeper's desk, the clerk must think of nothing but his work; he is chained to it as the galley-slave to his oar; the shoemaker may be poet or mystic, or both; the ploughman may turn a good furrow and a good verse together; Richard could at once use hands and thoughts. It troubled his protectors that they could not send him to college, but they comforted themselves that it would not be too late when he returned to his natural position in society. They had no plan in their minds, no date settled at which to initiate his restoration. All they had determined was, that he must at least be a grown man, capable of looking after his own affairs, when the first step for it was taken.

John Tuke was one of those who acknowledge in some measure the claims of their neighbor, but assert ignorance of any one who must be worshipped. And in truth, the God presented to him by his teachers was one with little claim on human devotion. The religious system brought to bear on his youth had operated but feebly on his conscience, and not at all on his affections. It had, however, so wrought upon his apprehensions, that, when afterward persuaded there was no ground for agonizing anticipation, he welcomed the conviction as in itself a redemption for all men; "for, surely," he argued, "fear is the worst of evils!" The very approach of such a relief predisposed him to receive whatever teaching might follow from the same source; and

soon he believed himself satisfied that the notion of religion—of duty toward an unseen Maker—was but an old-wives'-fable; and that, as to the hereafter, a mere cessation of consciousness was the only reasonable expectation. The testimony of his senses, although negative, he accepted as stronger on that side than any amount of what could, he said, be but the purest assertion on the other. Why should he heed an old book? why one more than another? The world was around him: some things he must believe; other things no man could! One thing was clear: every man was bound to give his neighbor fair play! He would press nothing upon Richard as to God or no God! he would not be dogmatic! he only wanted to make a man of him! And was he not so far successful? argued John. Was not Richard growing up a diligent, honest fellow, loving books, and leading a good life; whereas, had he been left to his father, he could not have escaped being arrogant and unjust, despising the poor of his own flesh, and caring only to please himself! In the midst of such superior causes of satisfaction, it also pleased Tuke to reflect that the trade he had taught his nephew was a clean one, which, while it rendered him superior to any shrewd trick fortune might play him, would not make his hands unlike those of a gentleman.

His aunt, however, kept wishing that Richard were better "set up," and looked more like his grandfather the blacksmith, whose trade she could not help regarding as manlier than that of her husband. Hence she had long cherished the desire that he should spend some time with her father. But John would not hear of it. He would get working at the forge,

he said, and ruin his hands for the delicate art in which he was now unapproachable.

For in certain less socialistic moods, John would insist on regarding bookbinding, in all and any of its branches, not as a trade, but an art.

CHAPTER V.

THE MANSONS.

At school, Richard had been friendly with a boy of gentle, nature, not many years older than himself. The boy had stood his friend in more than one difficulty, and Richard heartily loved him. But he had suddenly disappeared from the school, and so from Richard's ken: for years he had not seen him. One evening, as he was carrying home a book, he met this Arthur Manson, looking worn and sad. He would have avoided Richard, but he stopped him, and presently the old friendship was dominant. Arthur told him his story. He had had to leave school because of the sudden cessation, from what cause he did not know, of a certain annuity his mother had till then enjoyed—rendering it imperative that he should earn his own living, and contribute to her support, for although she still had a little money, it was not nearly enough. His sister was at work with a dressmaker, but as yet earning next to nothing. His mother was a lady, he said, and had never done any work. He was himself in a counting-house in the city, with a salary of forty pounds. He told him where they lived, and Richard promised to go and see him, which he did the next Sunday.

His friend's mother lived in a little house of two

floors, one of a long row lately built. The furniture was much too large, and it was difficult to move in the tiny drawing-room. It showed a feeble attempt at decoration, which made it look the poorer. Accustomed to his mother's care of her things, Richard perceived a difference: these were much finer but neglected, and looked as if they felt it. At their evening meal, however, the tea was good, and the bread and butter were of the best.

The mother was a handsome middle-aged woman —not so old, Richard somehow imagined, as she looked. She was stout and florid, with plenty of black, rather coarse hair, and seemed to Richard to have the carriage of a lady, but not speech equal to her manners. She was polite to him, but not apparently interested in her son's friend. Yet several times he found her gazing at him with an expression that puzzled him. He had, however, too clear a conscience to be troubled by any scrutiny.

All the evening Arthur's face wore the same look of depression, and Richard wondered what could be amiss. He learned afterward that the mother was so self-indulgent, and took so little care to make the money go as far as it could, that he had not merely to toil from morning to night at uncongenial labor, but could never have the least recreation, and was always too tired when he came home to understand any book he attempted to read. Richard learned also that he had no greatcoat, and went to the city in the winter with only a shabby comforter in addition to the clothes he had worn all the summer. But it was not Arthur who told him this.

The girl was a graceful little creature, with the same sad look her brother had, but not the same

depression. She seemed more delicate and less capable of labor; yet her hours were longer than his, and her confinement greater. Alice had to sit the whole day plying her needle, while Arthur was occasionally sent out to collect money. But her mistress was a kind-hearted woman, and not having a fashionable *clientèle*, had not yet become indifferent to the well-being of her workwomen. She even paid a crippled girl a trifle for reading to them, stipulating only that she should read fast, for she found the rate of their working greatly influenced by the rate of the reading. Life, if harder, was therefore not quite so uninteresting to Alice as to Arthur, and that might be why she seemed to have more vitality. Like her mother she had a quantity of hair, as dark as hers, but finer; dark eyes, not without meaning; irregular but very pleasing and delicate features; and an unusually white rather than pale complexion, with a sort of a sallow glow under the diaphanous skin. There was not a little piquancy in the expression of her countenance, and Richard felt it strangely attractive.

The youths found they had still tastes in common, although Arthur had neither time nor strength to follow them. Richard spoke of some book he had been reading. Arthur was interested, but Alice so much, that Richard offered to lend it to her: it was the first time she had heard a book spoken of in such a tone —one of suppressed feeling, almost veneration.

The mother did not join in their talk, and left them soon—her daughter said to go to church.

"She always goes by herself," Alice added. "She sees we are too tired to go."

They sat a long time with no light but that of the

fire. Arthur seemed to gather courage, and confessed the hopeless monotony of his life. He complained of no privation, only of want of interest in his work.

"Do *you* like your work?" he asked Richard.

"Indeed I do!" Richard answered. "I would sooner handle an old book than a bunch of bank-notes!"

"I don't doubt it," returned Arthur. "To me your workshop seems a paradise."

"Why don't you take up the trade, then? Come to us and I will teach you. I do not think my father would object."

"I learn nothing where I am!" continued Arthur.

"Our boat is not over-manned," resumed Richard. "Say you will come, and I will speak to my father."

"I wish I could! But how are we to live while I am learning?—No; I must grind away till——"

He stopped short, and gave a sigh.

"Till when, Arty?" asked his sister.

"Till death set me free," he answered.

"You wouldn't leave me behind, Arty!" said Alice; and rising, she put her arm round his neck.

"I wouldn't if I could help it," he replied.

"It's a cowardly thing to want to die," said Richard.

"I think so sometimes."

"There's your mother!"

"Yes," responded Arthur, but without emotion.

"And how should I get on without you, Arty?" said his sister.

"Not very well, Ally. But it wouldn't be for long. We should soon meet."

"Who told you that?" said Richard, almost rudely.

"Don't you think we shall know each other afterwards?" asked Arthur, with an expression of weary rather than sad surprise.

"I would be a little surer of it before I talked so coolly of leaving a sister like that! I only wish *I* had one to care for!"

A faint flush rose on the pale face of the girl, and as swiftly faded.

"Do you think, then, that this life is only a dream?" she said, looking up at Richard with something in her great eyes that he did not understand.

"Anyhow," he answered, "I would bear a good deal rather than run the risk of going so fast asleep as to stop dreaming it. A man can die any time," he continued, "but he can't dream when he pleases! I would wait! One can't tell when things may take a turn! There are many chances on the cards!"

"That's true," replied Arthur; but plainly the very chances were a weariness to him.

"If Arthur had enough to eat, and time to read, and a little amusement, he would be as brave as you are, Mr. Tuke!" said Alice. "—But you can't mean to say there will be no more of anything for us after this world! To think I should never see Arty again, would make me die before my time! I should be so miserable I would hardly care to keep him as long as I might. We must die some day, and what odds whether it be a few days sooner, or a few days later, if we're never going to meet again?"

"The best way is not to think about it," returned Richard. "Why should you? Look at the butterflies! They take what comes, and don't grumble at their sunshine because there's only one day of it."

"But when there's no sunshine that day?" suggested Alice.

"Well, when they lie crumpled in the rain, they're none the worse that they didn't think about it beforehand! We must make the best of what we have!"

"It's not worth making the best of," cried Alice, indignantly, "if that's all!"

My reader may well wonder at Richard: how could he be a lover of our best literature and talk as he did? or rather, talking as he did, how could he love it? But he had come to love it while yet under the influence of what his aunt taught him, poor as was her teaching. Then his heart and imagination were more in the ascendency. Now he had begun to admire the intellectual qualities of that literature more, and its imaginative less; for he had begun to think truth attainable through the forces of the brain, sole and supreme.

In matters of conduct, John Tuke and his wife were well agreed; in matters of opinion, they differed greatly. Jane went to church regularly, listened without interest, and accepted without question; had her husband gone, he would have listened with the interest of utter dissent. When Jane learned that her husband no longer "believed in the Bible," she was seized with terror lest he should die without repentance and be lost. Thereupon followed fear for herself: was not an atheist a horribly wicked man?—and she could not feel that John was horribly wicked! She tried her hardest, but could not; and concluded therefore that his unbelief must be affecting her. She prayed him to say nothing against the Bible to Richard—at least before he arrived at years of

discretion. This John promised; but subtle effluences are subtle influences.

John Tuke did right so far as he knew—at least he thought he did—and refused to believe in any kind of God; Jane did right, she thought, as far as she knew—and never imagined God cared about her: let him who has a mind to it, show the value of the difference!

Tuke was a thinking man;—that is, set a going in any direction that interested him, he could take a few steps forward without assistance. But he could start in no direction of himself. At a small club to which he belonged, he had been brought in contact with certain ideas new to him, and finding himself able to grasp them, felt at once as if they must be true. Certain other ideas, new to him, coming self-suggested in their train, he began immediately to imagine himself a thinker, able to generate notions to which the people around him were unequal. He began to grow self-confident, and so to despise. Taking courage then to deny things he had never believed, had only not thought about, and finding he thereby gave offence, he chose to imagine himself a martyr for the truth. He did not see that a denial involving no assertion, cannot witness to any truth; nor did he perceive that denial in his case meant nothing more than non-acceptance of things asserted. Had he put his position logically, it would have been this: I never knew such things; I do not like the notion of them; therefore I deny them: they do not exist. But no man really denies a thing which he knows only by the words that stand for it. When John Tuke denied the God in his notion, he denied only a God that could have no existence.

A man will be judged, however, by his truth toward what he professes to believe; and John was far truer to his perception of the duty of man to man than are ninety-nine out of the hundred of so-called Christians to the things they profess to believe. How many men would be immeasurably better, if they would but truly believe, that is, act upon, the smallest part of what they untruly profess to believe, even if they cast aside all the rest. John cast aside an allegiance to God which had never been more than a mockery, and set about delivering his race from the fear of a person who did not exist. For, true enough, there was no God of the kind John denied; only, what if, in delivering his kind from the tyranny of a false God, he aided in hiding from them the love of a true God—of a God that did and ought to exist? There are other passions besides fear, and precious as fear is hateful. If there be a God and one has never sought him, it will be small consolation to remember that he could not get proof of his existence. Is a child not to seek his father, because he cannot prove he is alive?

The aunt continued to take the boy to church, and expose him, for it was little more she did, to a teaching she could not herself either supply or supplement. It was the business of the church to teach Christianity! her part was to accept it, and bring the child where he also might listen and accept! But what she accepted as Christianity, is another question; and whether the acceptance of anything makes a Christian, is another still.

How much of Christianity a child may or may not learn by going to church, it is impossible to say; but certainly Richard did not learn anything that

drew his heart to Jesus of Nazareth, or caught him in any heavenly breeze, or even the smallest of celestial whirlwinds! He learned nothing even that made unwelcome such remarks as his father would now and then let fall concerning the clergy and the way they followed their trade; while the grin, full of conscious superiority, with which he unconsciously accompanied them, found its reflection in the honorable but not yet humble mind, beginning to be aware of its own faculty, and not aware that the religion presented in his aunt's church, a religion neither honorable nor elevating, was but the dullest travesty of the religion of St. Paul. Richard had, besides, read several books which, had his uncle been *careful* of the promise he had given his wife, he would have intentionally removed instead of unintentionally leaving about.

In the position Richard had just taken toward his new friends, he was not a little influenced by the desire to show himself untrammelled by prevailing notions, and capable of thinking for himself; but this was far from all that made him speak as he did. Many young fellows are as ready to deny as Richard, but not many feel as strongly that life rests upon what we know, that knowledge must pass into action. The denial of every falsehood under the sun would not generate one throb of life.

Richard told his adoptive parents where he had been, and asked if he might invite his new friends for the next Sunday. They made no objection, and when Arthur and Alice came, received them kindly. Richard took Arthur to the shop, and showed him the job he was engaged upon at the time, lauding his department as affording more satisfaction than mere binding.

"For," he said, "the thing that is not, may continue not to be; but the thing that is, should be as it was meant to be. Where it is not such, there is an evil that wants remedy. It may be that the sole remedy is binding, but that involves destruction, therefore it is a poor thing beside renovation."

The argument came from a well of human pity in himself, deeper than Richard knew. But both the pity he felt and the *truth* in what he said came from a source eternal of which he yet knew nothing.

"It would be much easier," continued Richard, "to make that volume look new, but how much more delightful to send it out with a revived assertion of its ancient self!"

Some natures have a better chance of disclosing the original in them, that they have not been to college, and set to think in other people's grooves, instead of those grooves that were scored in themselves long before the glacial era.

"For my part," said Arthur, "I feel like a book that needs to be fresh printed, not to say fresh bound! I don't feel why I am what I am. I would part with it all, except just being the same man!"

While the youths were having their talk, Alice was in Jane's bedroom, undergoing an examination, the end and object of which it was impossible she should suspect. Caught by a certain look in her sweet face, reminding her of a look that was anything but sweet, Jane had set herself to learn from her what she might as to her people and history.

"Is your father alive, my dear?" she asked, with her keen black eyes on Alice's face.

That grew red, and for a moment the girl did not answer. Jane pursued her catechising.

"What was his trade or profession?" she inquired.

The girl said nothing, and the merciless questioner went on.

"Tell me something about him, dear. Do you remember him? Or did he die when you were quite a child?"

"I do not remember him," answered Alice. "I do not know if I ever saw him."

"Did your mother never tell you what he was like?"

"She told me once he was very handsome—the handsomest man she ever saw—but cruel—so cruel! she said.—I don't want to talk about him, please, ma'am!" concluded Alice, the tears running down her cheeks.

"I'm sorry, my dear, to hurt you, but I'm not doing it from curiosity. You have a look so like a man I once knew,—and your brother had something of the same!—that in fact I am bound to learn what I can about you."

"What sort was the man we put you in mind of?" asked Alice, with a feeble attempt at a smile. "—Not a *very* bad man, I hope!"

"Well, not very good—as you ask me.—He was what people call a gentleman!"

"Was that all?"

"What do you mean?"

"I thought he was a nobleman!"

"Oh!—well, he wasn't that; he was a baronet."

Alice gave a little cry.

"Do tell me something about him," she said. "What do you know about him?"

"More than I choose to tell. We will forget him now, if you please!"

There was in her voice a tone of displeasure, which Alice took to be with herself. She was in consequence both troubled and perplexed. Neither made any more inquiries. Jane took her guest back to the sitting-room.

The moment her brother came from the workshop, Alice said to him—

"Are you ready, Arthur? We had better be moving!"

Arthur was a gentle creature, and seldom opposed her; he seemed only surprised a little, and asked if she was ill. But Richard, who had all the week been looking forward to a talk with Alice, and wanted to show her his little library, was much disappointed, and begged her to change her mind. She insisted, however, and he put on his hat to walk with them. But his aunt called him, and whispered that she would be particularly obliged to him if he would go to church with her that evening. He expostulated, saying he did not care to go to church; but as she insisted, he yielded, though not with the best grace.

Before another Sunday, there came, doubtless by his aunt's management, an invitation to spend a few weeks with his grandfather, the blacksmith.

Richard was not altogether pleased, for he did not like leaving his work; but his aunt again prevailed with him, and he agreed to go. In this, as in most things, he showed her a deference such as few young men show their mothers. Her influence came, I presume, through the strong impression of purpose she had made on him.

His uncle objected to his going, and grumbled a

good deal. As the brewer looks down on the baker, so the bookbinder looked down on the blacksmith.

He said the people Richard would see about his grandfather were not fit company for the heir of Mortgrange! But he knew the necessity of his going somewhere for a while, and gave in.

CHAPTER VI.

SIMON ARMOUR.

SIMON ARMOUR was past only the agility, not the strength of his youth, and in his feats of might and skill he cherished pride. Without being offensively conceited, he regarded himself—and well might—as the superior of any baronet such as his daughter's husband, and desired of him no recognition of the relationship. All he looked for from any man, whether he stood above or beneath his own plane, was proper pay for good work, and natural human respect. Some of the surrounding gentry, possibly not uninfluenced, in sentiment at least, by the growing radicalism of the age, enjoyed the free, jolly, but unpresuming carriage of the stalwart old man, to whom, if indeed on his head the almond-tree was already in blossom, the grasshopper was certainly not yet a burden: he could still ply a sledge-hammer in each hand. "My lord," came from his lips in a clear, ringing tone of good-fellowship, which the nobleman who occasionally stopped at his forge to give him some direction about the shoeing of this or that horse, liked well to hear, and felt the friendlier for—though I doubt if he would have welcomed it from a younger man.

Besides his daughter Jane and her husband, he alone was aware of the real parentage of the lad who passed as their son; and he knew that, if he lived long enough, an hour would call him to stand up for

the rights of his grandson. Perhaps it was partly in view of this that he had for years been an abstainer from strong drink; but I am inclined to attribute the fact chiefly to his having found the love of it gaining upon him. "Damn the drink!" he had been more than once overheard to say, "it shall know which of us is master!" And when Simon had made up his mind to a thing, the thing was—not indeed as good, but almost as sure as done. The smallest of small beer was now his strongest drink.

He was a hard-featured, good-looking, white-haired man of sixty, with piercing eyes of quite cerulean blue, and a rough voice with an undertone of music in it. There was music, indeed, all through him. In the roughest part of his history it was his habit to go to church—mainly, I may say entirely, for the organ, but his behavior was never other than reverent. How much he understood, may be left a question somewhat dependent on how much there may have been to understand; but he had a few ideas in religion which were very much his own, and which, especially some with regard to certain of the lessons from the Old Testament, would have considerably astonished some parsons, and considerably pleased others. He was a big, broad-shouldered man, with the brawniest arms, and eyes so bright and scintillant that one might fancy they caught and kept for their own use the sparks that flew from his hammer. His face was red, with a great but short white beard, suggesting the sun in a clean morning-fog.

A rickety omnibus carried Richard from the railway-station some five miles to the smithy. When the old man heard it stop, he threw down his ham-

mer, strode hastily to the door, met his grandson with a gripe that left a black mark and an ache, and catching up his portmanteau, set it down inside.

"I'll go with you in a moment, lad!" he said, and seizing with a long pair of pincers the horse-shoe that lay in process on the anvil, he thrust it into the fire, blew a great roaring blast from the bellows, plucked out the shoe glowing white, and fell upon it as if it were a devil. Having thus cowed it a bit, he grew calm, and more deliberately shaped it to an invisible idea. His grandson was delighted with the mingling of determination, intent and power, with certainty of result, manifest in every blow. In two minutes he had the shoe on the end of a long hooked rod, and was hanging it beside others on a row of nails in a beam. Then he turned and said—

"There, lad! that's off the anvil—and off my mind! Now I'm for you!"

"Grandfather," said Richard, "I shouldn't like to have you for an enemy!"

"Why not, you rascal! Do you think I would take unfair advantage of you?"

"No, that I don't! But you've got awful arms and hands!"

"They've done a job or two in their day, lad!" he answered; "but I'm getting old now! I can't do what I thought nothing of once. Well, no man was made to last forever—no more than a horse-shoe! There'd be no work for the Maker if he did!"

"I'm glad to see we're of one mind, grandfather!" said Richard.

"Well, why shouldn't we—if so be we're in the right mind!—Yes; we must be o' one mind if we're o' the right mind! The year or two I may be ahead

o' you in gettin' at it, goes for nothing: I started sooner!—But what may be the mind you speak of, sonny?"

The look of keen question the old man threw on him, woke a doubt in Richard whether he might not have misunderstood his grandfather.

"I think," he answered, "if a man was made to last forever, the world would get tired of him. When a horse or a dog has done his work, he's content—and so is his master."

"Nay, but I bean't! I bean't content to lose the old horse as I've shod mayhap for twenty years—no, not if I bean't his master!"

"There's no help for it, though!"

"None as I knows on. I'd be main glad to hear any news on the subjec' as you can supply?—No, I ain't content; I'm sorry!"

"Why don't the parsons say the old horse 'll rise again?"

"'Cause the parsons know nought about it. How should they?"

"They say we're going to rise again."

"Why shouldn't they? I guess I'll be up as soon as I may! I don't want no night to lie longer than rest my bones!"

"I mistook what you meant, grandfather. I thought, when you said you weren't made to last forever, that you meant there was an end of you!"

"Well, so you might, and small blame to you! It's a wrong way of speaking we all have. But you've set me thinking—whether by mistake or not, where's the matter! I never thought what come o' the old horse, a'ter all his four shoes takes to shinin' at oncet! For the old smith when he drops his

hammer—I have thought about *him*. Lord!—to think o' that anvil never ringin' no more to this here fist o' mine!"

While they talked, the blacksmith had put off his thick apron of hide; and now, catching up Richard's portmanteau as if it had been a hand-basket, he led the way to a cottage not far from the forge, in a lane that here turned out of the high road. It was a humble place enough—one story and a wide attic. The front was almost covered with jasmine, rising from a little garden filled with cottage flowers. Behind was a larger garden, full of cabbages and gooseberry-bushes.

A girl came to the door, with a kind, blushing face, and hands as red as her cheeks—a great-niece of the old smith. He passed her and led the way into a room half kitchen, half parlor.

"Here you are, lad—*at* home, I hope! Sech as it is, an' as much as it's mine, it's yours, an' I hope you'll make it so."

He deposited the portmanteau, glanced quickly round, saw that Jessie had not followed them, and said—

"You'll keep your good news till I've turned it over!"

"What good news, grandfather?"

"The good news that them as is close pared has no call to look out for the hoof to grow. I'm not saying you're wrong, lad—not *yet*; but everybody mightn't think your news so good as to be worth a special messenger! So till you're quite sure of it——"

"I *am* quite sure of it, grandfather!"

"I'm not; and having charge of the girl there, I'll

ha' no dish served i' my house as I don't think wholesome!"

"You're right there, grandfather! You may trust me!" answered Richard, respectfully.

The blacksmith had spoken with a decision that was imperative. His red face shone out of his white beard, and his eyes sparkled out of his red face; his head gave a nod, and his jaws a snap.

They had tea, with bread and butter and marmalade, and much talk about John and Jane Tuke, in which the old man said oftener, "your aunt" and "your uncle," than "your father" or "your mother;" but Richard put it down to the confusion that often accompanies age. When the bookbinding came up, Richard was surprised to discover that the blacksmith was far from looking upon their trade as superior to his own. It was plain indeed that he regarded bookbinding as a quite inferior and scarce manly employment. To the blacksmith, bookbinding and tailoring were much the same—fit only for women. Richard did not relish this. He endeavored to make his grandfather see the dignity of the work, insisting that its difficulty was the greater because of the less strength required in it: the strength itself had, he said, in certain of its operations, to be pared to the requisite fineness, to be modified with extreme accuracy; while in others, all the strength a man had was necessary, and especially in a shop like theirs, where everything was done by hand. But the fine work, he said, tired one much the most.

"Fine work!" echoed the smith with contempt. "There came a gentleman here to be shod t'other day from the Hall, who was a great traveller; and he told me he seen in Japan a blacksmith with a

sprig of may on the anvil before him, an' him a-copyin' to the life them blossoms in hard iron with his one hammer! What say you to that, lad?"

"Wonderful! But that same man couldn't do the heavy work you think nothing of, grandfather!"

"Nay, for that I don't know. I know I couldn't do his!"

"Then we'll allow that fine work may be a manly thing as well as hard work. But I do wish I could shoe a horse!"

"What's to hinder you?"

"Will you let me learn, grandfather?"

"Learn! I'll learn you myself. *You*'ll soon learn. It's not as if you was a bumpkin to teach! The man as can do anything, can do everything."

"Come along then, grandfather! I want to let you see that though my hands may catch a blister or two, they're not the less fit for hard work that they can do fine. I'll be safe to shoe a horse before many days are over. Only you must have a little patience with me."

"Nay, lad, I'll have a great patience with you. Before many days are over, make the shoe you may, and make it well; but to shoe a horse as the horse ought to be shod, that comes by God's grace."

They went back to the smithy, and there, the very day of his arrival, more to Simon's delight than he cared to show, the soft-handed bookbinder began to wield a hammer, and compel the stubborn iron. So deft and persevering was he, that, ere they went from the forge that same night, he could not only bend the iron to a proper curve round the beak of the anvil, but had punched the holes in half-a-dozen shoes. At last he confessed himself weary; and when his grand-

father saw the state of his hands, blistered and swollen so that he could not close them, he was able no longer to restrain his satisfaction.

"Come!" he cried; "you're a man after all, bookbinder! In six months I should have you a thorough blacksmith."

"I wouldn't undertake to make a bookbinder of you, grandfather, in the time!" returned Richard.

"Tit for tat, sonny, and it's fair!" said Simon. "I should leave the devil his mark on your white pages. How much of them do you read now, as you stick them together?"

"Not a word as I stick them together. But many are brought me to be doctored and mended up, and from some of them I take part of my pay in reading them—books, I mean, that I wouldn't otherwise find it easy to lay my hands upon—scarce books, you know."

"You would like to go to Oxford, wouldn't ye, lad—and lay in a stock to last your life out?"

"You might as well think to lay victuals into you for a lifetime, grandfather! But I should like to lay in a stock of the tools to be got at Oxford! It would be grand to be able to pick the lock of any door I wanted to see the other side of."

"I'll put you up to pick any lock you ever saw, or are likely to see," returned Armour. "I served my time to a locksmith. We didn't hit it off always, and so hit one another—as often almost as the anvil. So when I was out of my time, and couldn't get locksmith's work except in a large forge, I knew better than take it: for I couldn't help getting into rows, and was afraid of doing somebody a mischief when my blood was up. So I started for myself as a

general blacksmith—in a small way, of course. But my right hand ain't forgot its cunning in locks! I'll teach you to pick the cunningest lock in the world—whether made in Italy or in China."

"The lock I was thinking of," said Richard, "was that of the tree of knowledge."

"I've heerd," returned Simon, with more humor than accuracy, "as that was a raither pecooliar lock. How it was kep' red hot all the time without coal and bellows, I don't seem to see!"

"Ah!" said Richard, "you mean the flaming sword that turned every way?"

"I reckon I do!"

"You don't say you believe that story, grandfather?"

"I don't say what I believe or what I don't believe. The flamin' iron as I've had to do with, has both kep' me out o' knowledge, an' led me into knowledge! I'll turn the tale over again! You see, lad, when I was a boy, I thought everything my mother said and my father did, old-fashioned, and a bit ignorant-like; but when I was a man, I saw that, if I had started right off from where they set me down, I would ha' been farther ahead. To honor your father an' mother don't mean to stick by their chimbley-corner all your life, but to start from their front door and go foret. I went by the back door, like the fool I was, to get into the front road, and had a long round to make."

"I sha'n't do so with my father. He don't read much, but he thinks. He's got a head, my father!"

"There was fathers afore yours, lad! You needn't scorn yer gran'ther for your father!"

"Scorn you, grandfather! God forbid!—or, at least,——"

"You don't see what I'm drivin' at, sonny!—When an old tale comes to me from the far-away time, I don't pitch it into the road, any more'n I would an old key or an old shoe—a horse-shoe, I mean: it was something once, and it may be something again! I hang the one up, and turn the other over. An' if you be strong set on throwin' either away, lad, I misdoubt me you an' me won't blaze together like *one* flamin' sword!"

Richard held his peace. The old man had already somehow impressed him. If he had not, like his father, bid good-bye to superstition, there was in him a power that was not in his father—a power like that he found in his favorite books.

"Mind what he says, and do what he tells you, and you'll get on splendid!" his mother had said as he came away.

"Don't be afraid of him, but speak up: he'll like you the better for it," his father had counselled. "I should never have married your mother if I'd been afraid of him."

Richard, trying to follow both counsels, got on with his grandfather better than fairly.

CHAPTER VII.

COMPARISONS.

ALL things belong to every man who yields his selfishness, which is his one impoverishment, and draws near to his wealth, which is humanity—not humanity in the abstract, but the humanity of friends and neighbors and all men. Selfishness, I repeat, whether in the form of vanity or greed, is our poverty. John Tuke, being a clever man without a spark of genius, worshipped *faculty* as he called it—worshipped it where he was most familiar with it—that is, in his own mind and its operations, in his own hands and their handiwork. His natural atmosphere, however, was, happily, goodwill and kindliness; else the scorn of helplessness which sprang from his worship would have supplied the other pole to his selfishness.

He even cherished unconsciously the feeling that his faculty was a merit. He took the credit of his individual humanity, as if the good working of his brain, the thing he most admired, was attributable to his own will and forethought. The idea had never arisen in that brain, that he was in the world by no creative intent of his own. Nothing had as yet suggested to him that, after all, if he was clever, he could not help it. It had not occurred to him that there was a stage in his history antecedent to his consciousness—a stage in which his pleasure with regard to the next could not have been appealed to, or his consent asked—a stage, for any satisfaction concerning

which, his resultant consciousness must repose on a creative will, answerable to itself for his existence. A man's patent of manhood is that he can call upon God—not the God of any theology, right or wrong, but the God out of whose heart he came, and in whose heart he is. This is his highest power—that which constitutes his original likeness to God. Had any one tried to wake this idea in Tuke, he would have mocked at the sound of it, never seeing it. The words which represented it he would have thought he understood, but he would never have laid hold of the idea. He found himself what he found himself, and was content with the find; therefore asked no questions as to whence he came—was to himself consequently as if he had come from nowhere—which made it easy for him to imagine that he was going nowhither. He had never reflected that he had not made himself, and that therefore there might be a power somewhere that had called him into being, and had a word to say to him on the matter. The region where he began to be, had never, in speculation or mirage any more than in direct vision, lifted itself above the horizon-line of his consciousness. An ordinarily well-behaved man, with a vague narrow regard for his moral nature, and an admiration of intellectual humanity in the abstract, he thought of himself as exceptionally worthy, and as having neighbors mostly inferior. In relation to Richard, he was especially pleased with himself: had he not, for the sake of the youth, put himself in the danger of the law!

With not much more introspection than his uncle, but with a keener conscience and quicker observation, Richard had early remarked that, notwithstanding her assiduity in church-going, his mother did not

seem the happier for her religion: there was a cloud, or seeming cloud, on her forehead—a something that implied the lack of clear weather within. Had he known more he might have attributed it to anxiety about his own future, and the bearing her deed might have upon it. He might have argued that she dreaded the opposition she foresaw to the claim of her nephew; and felt that if her act should have despoiled him of his inheritance, life would be worthless to her. But in truth the cause of her habitual gloom was much deeper. She had from her mother inherited a heavy sense of responsibility, but not the confidence in whose strength her mother had borne it. She had, that is, an oppressive sense of the claims of a supernal power, but no feeling of the relationship which gives those claims, no knowledge of the loving help offered with the presentation of the claims. Where she might have rejoiced in the correlative claims bestowed upon her, she nourished only complaint. That God had made her, she could not sometimes help feeling a liberty he had taken. How could she help it, not knowing him, or the love that gave him both the power and the right to create! She had no window to let in the perpendicular light of heaven; all the light she had was the horizontal light of duty—invaluable, but, ever accompanied by its own shadow of failure, giving neither joy nor hope nor strength. Her husband's sense of duty was neither so strong nor so uneasy.

She had not attempted to teach Richard more, in the way of religion, than the saying of certain prayers, a ceremony of questionable character; but the boy, dearly loving his mother, and saddened by her lack of spirits, had put things together—amongst the rest, that

she was always gloomiest on a Sunday—and concluded that religion was the cause of her misery. This made him ready to welcome the merest hint of its falsehood. Well might the doctrine be false that made such a good woman miserable! He had no opportunity of learning what any vital, that is, *obedient* believer in the lord of religion, might have to say. Nothing he did hear would, without the reflex of his mother's unhappiness, have waked in him interest enough for hate: what was there about the heap of ashes he heard called the means of grace, to set him searching in it for seeds of truth! If we consider, then, the dullness of the prophecy, the evident suffering of his mother, and the equally evident though silent contempt of his father, we need not wonder that Richard grew up in what seemed to him a conviction that religion was worse than a thing of nought, was an evil phantom, with a terrible power to blight; a miasm that had steamed up from the foul marshes of the world, before man was at home in it, or yet acquainted with the beneficent laws of Nature. It was not merely a hopeless task to pray to a power which could not be entreated, because it did not exist; to believe in what was not, must be ruinous to the nature that so believed! He would give the lie no quarter! The best thing to do for his fellow, the first thing to be done before anything else could be done, was to deliver him from this dragon called Faith—the more fearful that it had no life, but owed its being and strength to the falsehood of cowards! Had he known more of the working of what is falsely called religion, he would have been yet more eager to destroy it. But he knew something of the tares only; he knew nothing of the wheat among the tares; knew

nothing of the wintry gleams of comfort shed on thousands of hearts by the most poverty-stricken belief in the merest and faultiest silhouette of a God. What a mission it would be, he thought, to deliver human hearts from the vampyre that, sucking away the very essence of life, kept fanning its unconscious victims with the promise of a dreary existence beyond the grave, secured by self-immolation on the desolate altar of an unlovable God, who yet called himself *Love!* Was it not a high emprise to rescue men from the incubus of such a mis-imagined divinity?

From the first dawn of consciousness, the young Lestrange had loved his kind. He gathered the chief joy of his life from a true relation to the life around him. Perhaps the cause of the early manifestation of this bent in him was the longing of his mother in her loneliness after a love that grew the more precious as it seemed farther away. She had parted with those who always loved her, for the love of a man who never loved her! But left to think and think, she had come at last to see that her loss was her best gain. For, with the loss of their presence, she began to know and prize the simplicities of human affection; from lack of love began to lift up her heart to Love himself, the father of all our loves.

Richard's love was not such as makes of another the mirror wherein to realize self; he loved his kind objectively, and was ready to suffer for it. At school he was the champion of the oppressed. Almost always one or other of the little boys would be under his protection; and more than once, for the sake of a weaker he had got severely beaten. But having set himself to learn the art of self-defence, his favor alone became shelter; and successful coverture aroused in him yet more the natural passion of pro-

tection. It became his pride as well as delight to be a saviour to his kind. His championship now sought extension to his mother, and to all sufferers from usurping creeds.

His grandfather found him, as he said, a chip of the old block; and rejoiced that Nature had granted his humble blood so potent a part in this compound of gentle and plebeian; for Richard showed himself a worthy workman! Simon Armour declared there was nothing the fellow could not do; and said to himself there never was such a baronet in the old Hall as his boy Dick would make. If only, he said, all the breeds worn out with breeding-in would revert to the old blood of Tubal Cain,—they might recover his lease of life. The day was coming, he said to himself, when there would be a sight to see at Mortgrange—a baronet that could shoe a horse better than any smith in the land! If his people then would not stand up for a landlord able to thrash every man-jack of them, and win his bread with his own hands, they deserved to become the tenants of a London grocer or American money-dealer! For his part, the French might have another try! *He* would not lift hammer against them!

By right of inheritance, Richard's muscles grew sinewy and hard, and speedily was he capable of handling a hammer and persuading iron to the full satisfaction of his teacher. When it came to such heavy work as required power and skill at once, the difference between the two men was very evident: where the whole strength is tasked, skill finds itself in the lurch; but Simon understood what could not be at once, as well as what would be at length. Neither was he disappointed, for, in far less than half the time an ordinary apprentice would have

taken, Richard could hold alternate swing with the blacksmith or his man, as, blow for blow, they pierced a block of metal to form the nave of a wheel. In ringing a wheel, he soon excelled; and his grandfather's smithy being the place for all kinds of blacksmith-work, Richard had learned the trade before he left. For, as his fortnight's holiday drew to an end, he heard from his parents that, as he was doing so well, they would like him to stay longer.

One reason for this their wish was, that he might become thoroughly attached to his grandfather: they desired to secure the prejudice of the future baronet for his own people. At the same time, by developing in him the workman, they thought to give him a better chance against further dishonoring and degrading his race, than his wretched father had ever had: the breed of Lestranges must, they said, be searched back for generations to find an honest man in it. A landlord above the selfishness, and free from the prejudices of his class, would be a new thing in the county-histories!

At the end of six weeks, Richard could shoe a sound horse as well as his grandfather himself. The old man had taken pains he would not have spent on an ordinary apprentice: it was worth doing, he said; and the return was great. Richard had made, not merely wonderful, but wonderfully steady progress. Not once had he touched the quick in driving those perfect nails through the rind of the marvellous hoof. From the first he disapproved of the mode of shoeing in use, and was certain a better must one day be discovered—one, namely, that would leave the natural motions of hoof and leg unimpeded; but in the meantime he shod as did other blacksmiths, and gave thorough satisfaction.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LOST SHOE.

It was now late in the autumn. Several houses in the neighborhood were full of visitors, and parties on horseback frequently passed the door of the smithy—well known to not a few of the horses.

One evening, as the sun was going down red and large, with a gorgeous attendance of clouds, for the day had been wet but cleared in the afternoon, a small mounted company came pretty fast along the lane, which was deep in mud. They were no sooner upon the hard road by the smithy, than one of the ladies discovered her mare had lost a hind shoe.

"She couldn't have pulled it off in a more convenient spot!" said a handsome young fellow, as he dismounted and gave his horse to a groom. "I'll take you down, Bab! Old Simon will have a shoe on Miss Brown in no time!"

Richard followed his grandfather to the door. A little girl, as she seemed to him, was sliding, with her hand on the young man's shoulder, from the back of a huge mare. She was the daintiest little thing, as lovely as she was tiny, with clear, pale, regular features, under a quantity of dark-brown hair. But that she was not a child, he saw the moment she was down; and he soon discovered that, not her beauty, but her heavenly vivacity, was the more captivating thing in her. At once her very soul

seemed to go out to meet whatever object claimed her attention. She must know all about everything, and come into relations with every live thing! As she stood by the side of the great brown creature from which she had dismounted—huge indeed, but carrying its bulk with a grand grace—her head reaching but half-way up the slope of its shoulder, she laid her cheek against it caressingly. So small and so bright, the little lady looked a very diamond of life.

A new shoe had to be forged; those already half-made were for work-horses. Partly from pride in his skill, Simon left the task to his grandson, and stood talking to the young man. Little thought Richard, as he turned the shoe on the anvil's beak, that he was his half-brother! He was a handsome youth, not so tall as Richard, and with more delicate features. His face was pale, and wore a rather serious, but self-satisfied look. He talked to the old blacksmith, however, without the slightest assumption: like others in the neighborhood, he regarded him as odd and privileged. There were more ladies and gentlemen, but Richard, absorbed in his shoe, heeded none of the company.

He was not more absorbed, however, than the girl who stood beside him: she watched every point in the making of it. Heedless of the flying sparks, she gazed as if she meant to make the next shoe herself. Had Richard not been too busy even to glance at her, he might have noticed, now and then, an involuntary sympathetic motion, imitatively responsive to one of his, invariably recurrent when he changed the position of the glowing iron. Her mind seemed working in company with his hands; she was all the time doing the thing herself; Richard's activity

was not merely reflected, but lived in her. When he carried the half-forged iron, to apply it for one tentative instant to the mare's hoof, Barbara followed him. The mare fidgeted. But her little mistress, who, noiseless and swift as a moth, was already at her head, spoke to her, breathed in her nostril, and in a moment made her forget what was happening in such a far-off province of her being as a hind foot. When Richard, back at the forge, was placing the shoe again in the fire, to his surprise her little gloved hand alighted beside his own on the lever of the bellows, powerfully helping him to blow. When once again the shoe was on the anvil, there again she stood watching—and watched until he had shaped the shoe to his intent.

Old Simon did not move to interfere: the hoof required no special attention. Almost every horse-hoof in a large circuit of miles was known to him—as well, he would remark, as the nail of his own thumb.

When Richard took up the foot, in order to prepare it for the reception of its new armor, again the mare was fidgety; and again the lady distracted her attention, comforting and soothing her while Richard trimmed the hoof a little.

"I say, my man," cried Mr. Lestrange, "mind what you're about there with your paring! I don't want that mare lamed.—She's much too good for 'prentice hands to learn upon, Simon!"

"Keep your mind easy, sir," answered the blacksmith. "That lad's ain't 'prentice-hands. He knows what he's about as well as I do myself!"

"He's young!"

"Younger, perhaps, than you think, sir!—but he knows his work."

It was a pretty picture—the girl peeping round under the neck of the great creature she was caressing, to see how the smith was getting on, whose back, alas! hid his hands from her. Just as he finished driving his second nail, the nervous animal gave her foot a jerk, and the point of the nail, through the hoof and projecting a little, tore his hand, so that the blood ran to the ground in a sudden rivulet.

"Hey! that don't look much like proper shoeing!" cried the young man. "I hope to goodness that's not the mare!"

"She's all right," answered Richard, re-arranging the animal's foot.

But Simon saw the blood, and sprang to his side.

"What the devil are you about, making a fool of me, Dick?" he cried. "Get out of the way."

"It was my fault," said the sweetest voice from under the neck of the mare, to the top of which a tiny hand was trying to reach. "My feather must have tickled her nose!"

She caught a glimpse of the blood, and turned white.

"I am so sorry!" she said, almost tearfully. "I hope you're not much hurt, Richard!"

Nothing seemed to escape her: she had already learned his name!

"It's not worth being sorry about, miss!" returned Richard, with a laugh. "The mare meant no harm!"

"That I'm sure she didn't—poor Miss Brown!"

answered the girl, patting the mare's neck. "But I wish it had been *my* hand instead!"

"God forbid!" cried Richard. "That *would* have been a calamity!"

"It wouldn't have been half so great a one. My hand is—well, not of *much* use. Yours can shoe a horse!"

"Yours would have been spoiled; mine will shoe as well as before!" said Richard.

It did not occur to the lady that the youth spoke better than might have been expected of a country smith. She was one of the elect few that meet every one on the common human ground, that never fear and never hurt. Her childish size and look harmonized with the childlike in her style, but she affected nothing. She would have spoken in the same way to prince or poet-laureate, and would have pleased either as much as the blacksmith. At the same time she did have pleasure in knowing that her frankness pleased. She could not help being aware that she was a favorite, and she wanted to be; but she wanted nothing more than to be a favorite. She desired it with old Betty, Sir Wilton's dairymaid, just as much as with Mr. Lestrange, Sir Wilton's heir; and everybody showed her favor, for she showed everybody grace.

The old smith was finishing the shoeing, and the mare, well used to him, and with more faith in him, stood perfectly quiet. Richard, a little annoyed, had withdrawn, and scarce thinking what he did, had taken a rod of iron, thrust it into the fire, and begun to blow. The little lady approached him softly.

"I'm *so* sorry!" she said.

"I shall be sorry too, if you think of it any more,

miss!" answered Richard. "Then there will be two sorry where there needn't be one!"

She looked up at him with a curious, interested, puzzled look, which seemed to say, "What a nice smith you are!"

The youth's manners had a certain—what shall I call it?—not polish, but rhythm, which came of, or at least was nourished by his love of the finer elements in literature. His friendly converse with books, and through them with certain of the dead who still speak, fell in with yet deeper influences, helping to set him in right atomic position toward other human atoms. His breed also contributed something. Happily for Richard, a man is not born only of his father or his grandfather; mothers have a share in the form of his being; ancestors innumerable, men and women, leave their traces in him. But what I have ventured to call the rhythm of his manner came of his love of verse, and of the true material of verse.

His hand kept on bleeding, and for a moment he was tempted, by bravado as well as kindness, to use the cautery so nigh, and prove to the girl how little he set by what troubled her; but he saw at once it would shock her, and took, instead, a handkerchief from his pocket to bind it with. Instantly the little lady was at his service, and he yielded to her ministration with a pleasure hitherto unknown to him. She took the handkerchief from his hand, but immediately gave it him again, saying, "It is too black!" and drawing her own from her pocket, deftly bound up his wound with it. Speech abandoned Richard. All present looked on in silence. Certain of the company had seen her the day before tie up the leg of a

wounded dog, and had admired her for it; but this was different! She was handling the hand of a human being—a man—a workman!—black and hard with labor! There was no necessity: the man was not in the least danger! It was nothing but a scratch! She was forgetting what was due to herself—and to them! Thus they thought, but thus they dared not speak. They knew her, and feared what she might say in reply. The mare was shod ere the handkerchief was tied to the lady's mind, and Simon stood, hammer in hand, looking on like the rest in silence, but with a curious smile.

As she took her hands from his, the young blacksmith looked thankfulness into her eyes—which sparkled and shone with the pleasure of human fellowship, and without the least shyness returned his gaze.

"There! Good-bye! I am so sorry! I hope your hand will be well soon!" she said, and at once followed her mare, which the smith's man was leading with caution through the door of the smithy, rather too low for Miss Brown.

Lestrange helped her to the saddle in silence, and before Richard realized that she was gone, he heard the merriment of the party mingling with the clang of their horses' hoofs, as they went swinging down the road. The fairy had set them all laughing already!

The instant they were gone, Simon showed a strange concern over the insignificant wound: he had been hasty with Richard, and unfair to him! Had he driven his nail one hair's-breadth too near the quick, Miss Brown would have made the smithy tight for them! He seemed anxious to show, with-

out actual confession, that he knew he had spoken angrily, and was sorry for it. He could not have shod the mare better himself, he said—but why the deuce did he let her tear his hand! It was not likely to gather, though, seeing Richard drank water! He must do nothing for a day or two! To-morrow being Saturday, they would have a holiday together, and leave the work to George!

CHAPTER IX.

A HOLIDAY.

RICHARD was willing enough, and it only remained to settle what they would do with their holiday. Suppressing a chuckle, Simon proposed that they should have a walk, and a look at Mortgrange: it was a place well worth seeing! "And then," he added, giving his grandson a poke, "we can ask after the mare, and learn how her new shoe fits." They had known him there, he said, the last thirty years, and would let them have the run of the place, for Sir Wilton and his lady were from home. Richard had never—to his knowledge—heard of Mortgrange, for Simon had hitherto avoided even mentioning the place; but he was ready to go wherever his grandfather pleased. Jessie would have company of her own, Simon said, with a nod and a wink: they need not trouble themselves about her!

So the next day, as soon as they had had their breakfast, they set out to walk the four or five miles that, by the road, lay between them and Mortgrange. It was a fine frosty morning. Not a few yellow leaves were still hanging, and the sun was warm and bright. It was one of those days near the death of the year, that make us wonder why the heart of man should revive and feel strong, while Nature is falling into her dreary trance. Richard was dressed in a tradesman's Sunday clothes, but tradesman as he was,

and was proud to be, he did not altogether look one. He was in high spirits—for no reason but that his spirits were high. He was happy because he was happy—"like any other body!" he would have said: where was the wonder such a fine day, with a pleasant walk before him, and his jolly grandfather for company! That he could not make one hair white or black, one hour blessed or miserable, did not occur to him. Yet he believed that joy or sorrow determined whether life was or was not worth living! He had never said to himself, "Here I am, and cannot help being, and yet can order nothing! Even to-day I am happy only because I cannot help it!" He had indeed begun to learn that a man has his duty to mind before his happiness, and that was much; but he had not yet been tried in the matter of doing his duty when unhappy. How would he feel then? Would he think duty without happiness worth living for? He was happy now, and that was enough! The putting forth of their strength and skill doubtless makes many men feel happy—so long as they are in health; but how when they come to feel that that health is nowise in their power? While they have it, it seems a part of their being inalienable; when they have lost it, a thing irrecoverable. Richard took the thing that came, asked no questions, returned no thanks. He found himself here:—whence he came he did not care; whither he went he did not inquire. The present was enough, for the present was good; when the present was no longer good, why, then——!

There are those to whom the present cannot be good save as a mode of the infinite. In such their divine origin asserts itself. Once known for what it

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for plates to stamp the covers of a right precious volume with!"

Simon misunderstood, and was on the point of flaring up, but what Richard followed with quieted him.

"I could almost give up bookbinding to work a pair of gates like those!" he said.

"I believe you, my boy!" returned his grandfather. "Come and live with me, and you shall!"

"But who would buy them when I had worked them?"

"If nobody had the sense, we'd put 'em up before the cottage!"

"Like a door-lock on a prayer-book!"

"No matter! They would be worth the worth of themselves!"

"You would have to make the wall so high, there would be no light in the house!" persisted Richard.

"Tut, man! did you never hear of a joke? All I say is, that if you'll come and work with me—I don't need to slave more than I like; I've got a few pounds in the bank!—if you'll work, I'll teach you. Leave me to find a fit place for what comes of it! They do most things at the foundries now, but there's a market yet for hammer-work—if it be good enough, and not too dear; for them as knows a good thing when they sees it, ain't generally got much money to buy things. It's my opinion the only way to learn the worth of a thing is to have to go without it."

"Few people fancy iron gates, I fear."

"More might fancy them if they were to be had good," returned the old man.

The gate had admitted them to a long winding road, with clumps of trees here and there on the bor-

ders of it. The road was apparently not much used, for it was more than sprinkled with grass all over. A ploughed field was on one side, and a wild heathy expanse, dotted with fir-trees, on the other. Suddenly on the side of the field, gradually on that of the heath, the ground changed to the green sward of a park.

"A grand place for thinking!" said Richard to himself.

But in truth Richard had hardly yet begun to think. He only followed the things that came to him; he never said to things, *Come;* neither, when they came, did he keep them, and make them walk up and down before him till he saw what they were; he did not search out their pedigree, get them to give an account of themselves, show what they could do, or, in short, be themselves to him. He had written a few verses —not bad verses, but with feeling only, not thought in them. For instance, he had addressed an ode to the allegorical personage called Liberty, in which he bepraised her until, had she been indeed a woman, she must have been ashamed: she was the one essential of life! the one glory of existence! he was no man who would not die for her! But what was the thing he thus glorified? Liberty to go where you pleased, do what you liked, say what you chose!—that was all. Of inward liberty, of freedom from mental or spiritual oppression, from passion, from prejudice, from envy, from jealousy, from selfishness, from unfairness, from ambition, from false admiration, from the power of public opinion, from any motive energy save that of love and truth—a freedom of which outward freedom is scarce worth the shadow—of such liberty, for all the good

books he had read, for all the good poems he had admired, Richard had not yet begun to dream, not to say *think*. Then again, he would write about love, and he had never been in love in his life! All he knew of love was the pleasure of imagining himself the object of a tall, dark-eyed, long-haired, devoted woman's admiration. He had never even thought whether he was worthy of being loved. He was indeed more worthy of love than many to whom it is freely given; but he knew no more about it, I say, than a chicken in the shell knows of the blue sky. The shabby spinster, living with her cousin the baker in the house opposite, knew a hundred times better than he what the word *love* meant: she had a history, he had none.

I will not describe the house of Mortgrange. It seemed to Richard the oldest house he had ever seen, and it moved him strangely. He said to himself the man must be happy who called such a house his own, lived in it, and did what he liked with it.

The road they had taken brought them to the back of the Hall, as the people on the estate called the house. The blacksmith went to a side-door, and asked if he and his grandson might have a look at the place: he had heard the baronet was from home! The man said he would see; and returning presently, invited them to walk in.

Knowing his grandson's passion, Simon's main thought in taking him was to see him in the library, with its ten thousand volumes: it would be such a joke to watch him pondering, admiring, coveting his own! As soon, therefore, as they were in the great hall, he asked the servant whether they might not see the

library. The man left them again, once more to make inquiry.

It was a grand old hall where they stood, fitter for the house of a great noble than a mere baronet; but then the family was older than any noble family in the county, and the poor baronetcy, granted to a foolish ancestor, on carpet considerations, by the needy hand of the dominie-king, was no great feather in the cap of the Lestranges. The house itself was older than any baronetcy, for no part of it was later than the time of Elizabeth. It was of fine stone, and of great size. The hall was nearly sixty feet in height, with three windows on one side, and a great one at the end. They were thirty feet from the floor, had round heads, and looked like church-windows. The other side was blank. Mid-height along the end opposite the great window ran a gallery.

To the sudden terror of Richard, who stood absorbed in the stateliness of the place, an organ in the gallery burst out playing. He looked up trembling, but could see only the tops of the pipes. As the sounds rolled along the roof, reverberated from the solid walls, and crept about the corners, it seemed to him that the soul of the place was throbbing in his ears the words of a poem centuries old, which he had read a day or two before leaving London:—

"Erthe owte of erthe es wondirly wroghte,
Erthe hase getyn one erthe a dignyte of noghte,
Erthe appone erthe hase sett alle his thoghte,
How that erthe appone erthe may be heghe broghte."

As he listened, his eyes settled upon a suit of armor in position; it became to him a man benighted, lost, forgotten in the cold; the bones were all dusted out

of him by the wintry winds; only the shell of him was left.

"Mr. Lestrange is in the library, and will see Mr. Armour," said the voice of the servant.

An election was at hand, and at such a time certain persons are more courteous than usual.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIBRARY.

Simon and Richard followed the man through a narrow door in the thick wall, across a wide passage, and then along a narrow one. A door was thrown open, and they stepped into a sombre room. The floor of the hall was of great echoing slabs of stone, but now their feet sank in the deep silence of a soft carpet.

Here a new awe, dwelling, however, in an air of homeliness, awoke in Richard. Around him, from floor to ceiling, was ranged a whole army of books, mostly in fine old bindings ; in spite of open window and great fire and huge chimney, the large lofty room was redolent of them. Their odor, however, was not altogether pleasing to Richard, whose practiced organ detected in it the signs of a blamable degree of decay. The faint effluvia of decomposing paper, leather, paste, and glue, were to Richard as the air of an ill-ventilated ward in the nostrils of a physician. He sniffed and made an involuntary grimace ; he had not seen Mr. Lestrange, who was close to him, half hidden by a book-case that stood out from the wall.

"Good-morning, Armour ! " said Lestrange. "Your young man does not seem to relish books ! "

"In a grand place like this, sir," remarked Richard, taking answer upon himself, "such a library as I never saw, except, of course, at the British Museum, it makes a man sorry to discover indications of neglect."

"What do you mean?" returned Lestrange in displeasure.

Richard's remark was the more offensive that his superior style issued in a comparatively common tone. Neither was there anything in the appearance of the place to justify it.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, fearing he had been rude, "but I am a bookbinder!"

"Well?" rejoined Lestrange, taking him now for a sneaking tradesman on the track of a big job.

"I know at once the condition of an old book by the smell of it," pursued Richard. "The moment I came in, I knew there must be some here in a bad way—not in their clothes merely, but in their bodies as well—the paper of them, I mean. Whether a man has what they call a soul or not, a book certainly has: the paper and print are the body, and the binding is the clothes. A gentleman I know—but he's a mystic—goes farther, and says the paper is the body, the print the soul, and the meaning the spirit."

A pretty fellow to be an atheist! my reader may well think.

Mr. Lestrange stared. He must be a local preacher, this blacksmith, this bookbinder, or whatever he was!

"I am sorry you think the books hypocrites," he said. "They look all right!" he added, casting his eyes over the shelves before him.

"Would you mind me taking down one or two?" asked Richard. "My hands are rather black, but the color is ingrain, as Spenser might say."

"Do so, by all means," answered Lestrange, curious to see how far the fellow could support with proof the accuracy of his scent.

Richard moved three paces, and took down a volume--one of a set, the original edition in quarto of "The Decline and Fall," bound in russia-leather.

"I thought so!" he said; "going!—going!—Look at the joints of this Gibbon, sir. That's always the way with russia—now-a-days, at least!—Smell that, grandfather! Isn't it sweet? But there's no stay in it! Smell that joint! The leather's stone-dead!—It's the rarest thing to see a volume bound in russia, of which the joints are not broken, or at least cracking. These joints, you see, are gone to powder! All russia does—sooner or later, whatever be the cause.—Just put that joint to your nose, sir! That's part of what you smell so strong in the room."

He held out the book to him, but Lestrange drew back: it was not fit his nose should stoop to the request of a tradesman!

Richard replaced the book, and took down one after another of the same set.

"Every one, you see, sir," he said, "going the same way! Dust to dust!"

"If they're *all* going that way," remarked the young man, "it would cost every stick on the estate to rebind them!"

"I should be sorry to rebind any of them. An old binding is like an old picture! Just look at this French binding! It's very dingy, and a good deal broken, but you never see anything like that now-a-days—as mellow as modest, and as rich as roses! Here's one says the same thing as your grand hall out there, only in a piping voice."

Lestrange was not exactly stuck-up; he had feared the fellow was bumptious, and felt there was no knowing what he might say next, but by this time had

ceased to imagine his dignity in danger. The young blacksmith's admiration of the books and of the hall pleased him, and he became more cordial.

"Do you say *all* russia-leather behaves in the same fashion?" he asked.

"Yes, now. I fancy it did not some years ago. There may be some change in the preparation of the leather. I don't know. It is a great pity! Russia is lovely to the eye—and to the nostrils.—May I take a look at some of the *old* books, sir?"

"What do you call an *old* book?"

"One not later, say, than the time of James the First.—Have you a first folio, sir?"

Lestrange was thinking of his coming baronetcy.

"First folio?" he answered, absently. "I dare say you will find a good many first folios on the shelves!"

"I mean the folio Shakspere of 1623. There are, of course, many folios much scarcer! I saw one the other day that the booksellers themselves gave eight hundred guineas for!"

"What was it?" asked Lestrange carelessly.

"It was a wonderful copy—unique as to condition—of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*;—not a *very* interesting book, though I do not doubt Shakspere was fond of it. You see Shakspere could hear the stones preaching!"

"By Jove, a man may hear the sticks do that any Sunday!"

"True enough, sir, ha-ha!"

"Have you read Gower, then?"

"A good deal of him."

"Was it that same precious copy you read him in?"

"It was; but I hadn't time for more than about the half. I must finish on another edition, I fear."

"How did you get hold of a book of such value?"

"The booksellers who bought it asked me to take it into my hospital. It wanted just a little, a very little patching. The copy in the museum is not to compare to it."

"You say it was not interesting?"

"Not *very* interesting, I said, sir."

"Why did you read so much of it, then?"

"When a book is hard to come at, you are the more ready to read it when you have the chance."

"I suppose that's why one borrows his neighbor's books and don't read his own! I seldom take one down from those shelves."

Richard felt as if a wall was broken down between them.

All the time they talked, old Simon stood beside, pleased to note how well his grandson could hold up the ball with the young squire, but saying nothing. If the matter had been hoof of horse, cow or ass, he would not have been silent: he knew hoofs better than Richard knew books.

Richard took down a small folio, the back of which looked much too soft and loose. Opening it, he found what he expected—a wreck. It was hardly fit to be called any more a book. The clothes had forsaken the body, or rather the body had decayed away from the clothes.

"Now, look here!" he said. "Here is Cowley's Poems—in such a state that I doubt if anything would ever make a book of it again. I thought by the back all was wrong inside! See how the leaves

have come away singly: the paper itself is rotten! I doubt if there is any way to make paper so far gone as this hold together. I know a good deal can be done, and I must learn what is known. I sha'n't be master of my trade till I know all that can be done now to stop such a book from crumbling into dust! Then I may find out something more!"

"Well, for that one, I don't think it matters: Cowley ain't much!" said Lestrange, throwing the volume on a table. "I remember once taking down the book, and trying to read some of it: I could not; it's the dullest rubbish ever written."

"It's not so bad as that, sir!" answered Richard, and taking up the book he turned the leaves with light, practiced hand. "He was counted the greatest poet of his day, and no age loves dullness! Listen a moment, sir; I will read only one stanza."

He had found the "Hymn to the Light," and read:—

> "First-born of *Chaos*, who so fair didst come
> From the old Negro's darksome womb!
> Which when it saw the lovely Child,
> The melancholy Mass put on kind looks and smil'd."

"I don't see much in that!" said Lestrange, as Richard closed the book, and glanced up expectant.

Richard was silent for an instant.

"At any rate," he returned, "it is necessary to the understanding of our history, that we should know the kind of thing admired and called good at any given time of it: so our lecturer at King's used to tell us."

"At King's!" cried Lestrange.

"King's College, London, I mean," said Richard.

"They have evening classes there, to which a man can go after his day's work. My father always took care I should have time for anything I wanted to do. I go still when I am at home—not always, but when the lecturer takes up any special subject I want to know more about."

"You'll be an author yourself some day, I suppose!"

"There's little hope or fear of that, sir! But I can't bear not to know what's in my very hands. I can't be content with the outsides of the books I bind. It seems a shame to come so near light and never see it shine. If I were a tailor, I should learn anatomy. I know one tailor who is as familiar with the human form as any sculptor in London—more, perhaps!"

Lestrange began to feel uncomfortable. If he let this prodigy go on talking and asking questions, he would find out how little he knew about anything! But Richard was no prodigy. He was only a youth capable of interest in everything, with the stimulus of not finding the fountains of knowledge at his very door, and the aid of having to work all day at some pleasant task, nearly associated with higher things that he loved better. He did know a good deal for his age, but not so very much for his opportunity, his advantages being great. Most men who learn would learn more, I suspect, if they had work to do, and difficulty in the way of learning. Those counted high among Richard's advantages. He was, besides, considerably attracted by the mechanics of literature—a department little cultivated by those who have most need of what grows in it.

Further talk followed. Lestrange grew interested

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in the phenomenon of a blacksmith that bound books and read them. He began to dream of patronage and responsive devotion. What a thing it would be for him, in after years, with the cares of property and parliament combining to curtail his leisure, to have such a man at his beck, able to gather the information he desired, and to reduce, tabulate and embody it so as to render his chief the best-informed man in the House! while at other times he would manage for him his troublesome tenants, and upon occasion shoe his wife's favorite horse! He could also depend upon him to provide, from the rich stores of his memory, suitable quotations when he wished to make a speech! Lestrange had never thought whether the wish to *appear* might not indicate the duty to *be*; had never seen that, until he *was*, to desire to *appear* was to cherish the soul of a sneak. He had no notion of anything but the look; no notion that, having made a good speech, he would deserve an atom the less praise for it that he could not have made it without his secretary. Did any one think the less of clearing a five-barred gate, he would have answered, that it could not be done without a horse! Where was the difference? A man you paid to be your secretary, still more a man whose education to be your secretary you had paid for—was he not yours in a way at least analogous to that in which a horse was yours? He could break away from you more easily, no doubt, but a man knew better than a horse on which side his bread was buttered!

"I think, squire, I'll go and have a pipe with the coachman!" said the blacksmith at length.

"As you please, Armour," answered Lestrange. "I will take care of your—nephew, is he?"

"My grandson, sir—from London."

"All right! There's good stuff in the breed, Armour!—I will bring him to you."

Richard went on taking down book after book, and showing his host how much they required attention.

"And you could set all right for—?—for how much?" asked Lestrange.

"That no one could say. It would, however, cost little more than time and skill. The material would not come to much. Only, where the paper itself is in decay, I do not know about that. I have learned nothing in that department yet."

"For generations none of us have cared about books—that must be why they have gone so to the bad!—the books, I mean," he added with a laugh. "There was a bishop, and I think there was a poet, somewhere in the family; but my father—hm!—I doubt if he would care to lay out money on the library!"

"Tell him," suggested Richard, "that it is a very valuable library—at least so it appears to me from the little I have seen of it; but I am sure of this, that it is rapidly sinking in value. After another twenty years of neglect it would not fetch half the price it might easily be brought up to now."

"I don't know that that would weigh much with him. So long as he sees the shelves full and the book-backs all right, he won't want anything better. He cares only how things look."

"But the whole look of the library is growing worse—gradually, it is true, and in a measure it can't be helped—but faster than you would think, and faster than it ought. The backs, which, from a library point of view, are the faces of the books,

may, up to a certain moment, look well, and after that go much more rapidly. I fear damp is getting at these from somewhere!"

"Would you undertake to set all right, if my father made you a reasonable offer?"

"I would—provided I found no injury beyond the scope of my experience."

Richard spoke in book-fashion: he was speaking about books, and to a social superior! he was not really pompous.

"Well, if my father should come to see the thing as I do, I will let you know. Then will be the time for a definite understanding!"

"The best way would be that I should come and work for a set time: by the progress I made, and what I cost, you could judge."

Lestrange rang the bell, and ordered the attendant to take the young man to his grandfather.

The two wandered together over the grounds, and Richard saw much to admire and wonder at, but nothing to approach the hall or the library.

On their way home, Simon, to his grandson's surprise, declared himself in favor of his working at the Mortgrange library. But the idea tickled his fancy so much, that Richard wondered at the oddity of his grandfather's behavior.

CHAPTER XI.

ALICE.

Soon after his visit to Mortgrange, the young bookbinder went home, recalled at last by his parents. John Tuke was shocked with the hardness and blackness of his hands, and called his wife's attention to them. She, however, perhaps from nearer alliance with the smithy, professed to regard their condition as by no means a serious matter. She could not, nevertheless, quite conceal her regret, for she was proud of her boy's hands.

Richard supposed of course that his father's annoyance came only from the fear that his touch would be no longer sufficiently delicate for certain parts of his work; and certainly, when he looked at them, he thought the points of his fingers were broader than before, and was a little anxious lest they should have lost something of their cunning. He did not know that mechanical faculty, for fine work as well as rough, goes in general with square-pointed fingers. Delicately tapered fingers, whatever they may indicate in the way of artistic invention, are not the fingers of the painter or the sculptor. The finest fingers of the tapering kind I have ever seen were those of a distinguished chemist of the last generation. Eager to satisfy both his father and himself, that the hands of the bookmender had not degenerated more than his skill could counteract, Richard

selected, from a few that were waiting his return, the book worthiest of his labor, set to work, and by a thorough success quickly effected his purpose.

He was now, however, anxious, before doing anything else, to learn all that was known for the restoration and repair of the insides of books. In this an old-bookseller, a friend of his father, was able to give him no little help, putting him up to wrinkles not a few. Richard was surprised to see how, with a penknife, on a bit of glass, he would pare the edge of a scrap of paper to half the thickness, in order to place two such edges together, and join them without a scar. He taught him how to clean letterpress and engravings from ferruginous, fungous and other kinds of spots. He made him acquainted with a process which considerably strengthened paper that had become weak in its cohesion; and when Richard would make further experiment, he supplied him with valueless letterpress to work upon. His time was thus more than ever occupied. For many weeks he scarcely even read.

It was not long, however, before he bethought him that he must see Arthur. He went the same evening to call on him, but found other people in the house, who could tell him nothing about the family that had left. His aunt said she had seen Alice once, and knew they were going, but did not know where they were gone. Richard would have inquired at the house in the City where Arthur was employed, but he did not know even the name of the firm. Once, from the top of an omnibus, he saw him—in the same shabby old comforter, looking feebler and paler and more depressed than ever; but when he got

down, he had lost sight of him, and though he ran hither and thither, looking up this street and that, he recovered no glimpse of him. The selfish mother and the wasting children came back to him vividly as he walked sadly home.

He had counted Alice the nicest girl he had ever seen, but since going to the country had not thought much about her; and now, since seeing the fairy-like lady with the big brown mare, he had a higher idea of the feminine. But although therefore he would not have thought the pale, sweet-faced dressmaker quite so pleasing as before, he would, because of the sad look into which her countenance always settled, have felt her quite as interesting.

Richard had not yet arrived at any readiness to fall in love. It is well when this readiness is delayed until the individuality is sufficiently developed to have its own demands. I venture to think one cause of unhappiness in marriages is, that each person's peculiar self was not, at the time of engagement, sufficiently grown for a natural selection of the suitable, that is, the *correspondent;* and that the development which follows is in most cases the development of what is reciprocally non-correspondent, and works for separation and not approximation. The only thing to overcome this or any other disjunctive power is development in the highest sense, that is, development of the highest and deepest in us—which can come only by doing right. The man who is growing to be one with his own nature, that is, one with God who is the *naturing* nature, is coming nearer and nearer to every one of his fellow-beings. This may seem a long way round to love, but it is the only road by which we can arrive at true love of

any kind; and he who does not walk in it will one day find himself on the verge of a gulf of hate.

Individuality, forestalled by indifference, had no chance of keeping Sir Wilton and Lady Ann apart, but certainly had done nothing to bring them together. Where all is selfishness on both sides, what other correspondences may exist will hardly come into play. The loss of the unloved heir had perhaps done a little to approximate them; but they speedily ceased to hold any communication of ideas on the matter. As they did nothing to recover him, so they seemed to take almost no thought as to his existence or non-existence. If he were alive, neither father nor stepmother had the least desire to discover him. Answering honestly, each would have chosen that he should remain unheard of. As to the possibility of his dying in want, or being brought up in wickedness, that did not trouble either of them. His stepmother did not think the more tenderly of another woman's child that she cared for her own children only because they were hers. If you could have got the idea into the pinched soul of Lady Ann, that the human race is one family, it would but have enhanced her general dislike, her feeble enmity to humanity. When she did or said anything to displease him, Sir Wilton would sometimes hint at a new advertisement, but she did not much heed the threat. On the whole, however, they had got on better than might have been expected, partly in virtue of her sharp tongue and her thick skin, which combination of the offensive and defensive put Sir Wilton at a disadvantage: however sharp his retort might be, she never felt it, but went on; and harping does not always mean such

pleasant music, that you want to keep the harper awake. She had brought him four children—Arthur, the one whose acquaintance Richard had made, a younger brother who promised foully, and two girls —the elder common in feature and slow in wits, but with eyes and a heart; the younger clever and malicious.

One stormy winter night, as Richard was returning from a house in Park Crescent, to which he had carried home a valuable book restored to strength and some dégree of aged beauty, from one of the narrow openings on the east side of Regent Street, came a girl, fighting with the wind and a weak-ribbed umbrella, and ran buffeted against him, notwithstanding his endeavor to leave her room. The collision was very slight, but she looked up and begged his pardon. It was Alice. Before he could speak, she gave a cry, and went from him in blind haste as fast as she could go; but with the fierce wind, her perturbation, and the unruliness of the umbrella, which she was vainly trying to close that she might run the better, she struck full against a lamp-post, and stood like one stunned and on the point of falling. Richard, however, was close behind her, and put an arm round her. She did not resist; she was indeed but half-conscious. The same moment he saw a cab and hailed it. The man heard and came. Richard lifted her into it, and got in after her. But Alice came to herself, got up, and leaning out of the cab on the street side, tried to open the door. Richard caught her, drew her back, and made her sit down again.

"Richard! Richard!" she cried, as she yielded to his superior strength, and burst into tears, "where are you taking me?"

"Wherever you like, Alice. You shall tell the cabman yourself. What is the matter with you? Don't be angry with me. It is not my fault that I have not been to see you and Arthur. You went away, and nobody could tell me where to find you! Give the cabman your address, Alice."

"I'm not going home," sobbed Alice.

"Where are you going, then? I will go with you. You're not fit to go anywhere alone! I'm afraid you're badly hurt!"

"No, no! Do let me out. Indeed, indeed, you must!"

"Well, then, I won't! You'll drop down and be left to the police! It's horrible to think of you out in such a night! Come home with me. If you are in any trouble, my mother will help you."

Here Alice, who had yielded to the pressure with which Richard held her, broke from him, and pushed him away. Richard put his other arm across, and laid hold of the door of the cab, telling the man to get up on his box, and have a little patience. He obeyed, and Richard turned again to Alice.

"Richard," she said, "your mother would kill me!"

"Nonsense!" he rejoined; "what a fancy! My mother!"

"I've seen her since you went. She made me promise——"

But there Alice stopped, and Richard could get from her nothing but entreaties to be let out.

"If you don't," she said at last, growing desperate, "I will scream."

"Let me take you at least, then, a little nearer where you want to go," pleaded Richard.

"No! no! set me down."

"Tell me where you live."

"I daren't."

"I must see my old friend, Arthur! and why shouldn't I see his sister? My father and mother ain't tyrants! They know what that would make of me! They let me go where I please, or give a good reason why I should not."

"Oh, they'll do that fast enough!" returned Alice, in a tone of mingled despair and scorn. "But," she added immediately, "the worst of it is, they'll be in the right. Let me out, Richard, or I shall hate you!"

But with the word she dropped her head on his shoulder, and sobbed as if her heart would sob its last.

He made repeated attempts to soothe her, but, as he made them, he felt them foolish, for he saw that nothing would alter her determination to be set down.

"Must I leave you, then, on this very spot?" he said.

"Yes, yes! here—here!" she answered, and rose with apparent eagerness to get away from him.

He got out, and turned to her, but she did not accept his offered help.

"Won't you shake hands with me?" he said. "I did not mean to offend you!"

She answered nothing, but hurried away a step or two, then turned and lifted her arms as if to embrace him, but turned again instantly, and fled away among the shadows of the wildly flickering lamps. By the time he had paid the cabman, he saw it would be useless to follow, for she was out of sight.

The wide street was almost deserted; its lamps shuddered flaring and streaming and darkening in the fierce gusts of the wind. A vague army of evil things

seemed to start up and come crowding between him and Alice. He turned homeward, with a sense of loss and a great sadness at his heart, unable even to speculate as to the cause of Alice's behavior. All he knew was, that his mother had something to do with it. For the first time since childhood, he felt angry with his mother.

"She fancies," he said to himself, "that I am in love with the girl, and she thinks her not good enough for me! I'm not in love with her; but *any* good girl I cared for, I should count good enough! When my mother's turn comes, off she goes to the rest of the social tyrants that look down on a brother because he can do twenty things they can't! If the world went out of gear, would *they* make it go? I'll be fair whatever I be! It'll be my mother's own fault if I fall in love with Alice! She has made me pity her with all my heart—the poor, white thing!—so thin and pinched, and such big eyes! It would be just bliss to have a creature like that to trust you, so that you could comfort her! What can my mother have said to her? She has made her awfully miserable, anyhow! Perhaps her mother drinks!—What if she do! Alice don't!"

He was determined to have some explanation from his mother. But she foiled him. The moment she saw what he meant, she turned away, listened in silence, and spoke with a decision that savored of anger.

"They're not people your father and I will have you know," she said, without looking at him.

"But why, mother?" asked Richard.

"We're not bound to explain everything to you, Richard. It ought to be enough that we *have* a good reason."

"If it be a good reason, why shouldn't I know it, mother?" he persisted. "Good things don't require to be hidden."

"That's very true; they do not."

"Then why hide this one?"

"Because it is not good."

"You said it was a good reason!"

"So it is."

"Good and not good! How can that be?" said Richard, with a great lack of logic. By this time he ought to have been able to see that the worst of facts may be the best of reasons.

His mother held her peace, knowing she was right, but not knowing how to answer what she thought his cleverness.

"I mean to go and see them, mother," he said.

"You'll repent it, Richard. The woman is not respectable!"

"She won't bite me!"

"There's worse than biting!"

"I allow," pursued Richard, "she may take a drop too much; her nose does look a little suspicious! But if she ain't what she should be, it's hard lines Arthur and Alice should suffer for the sins of their mother."

"The Bible says the sins of the fathers are visited on the children."

"The Bible! If the Bible says what ain't right, are we to do it?"

"Richard, I'll have no such word spoken again in my house!" exclaimed his mother.

"Are you going to turn me out, mother, because I say we should not do what is wrong, whoever tells us to?"

"No, Richard! You said the Bible said what was wrong; and that's blasphemy!"

"Didn't you say, mother, that the Bible said we ought to visit the sins of the fathers on the children?"

"God forbid!" cried the poor woman, driven almost to distraction; "I said nothing of the kind! That would be awful! What the Bible says is, that God does so."

"Well, if God chooses, we must leave him to do as he chooses—not do likewise!"

"Surely, surely, Richard! If *he* does it, he knows what he's about, and we don't."

"All right, mother! Then tell me where Arthur and Alice are gone. I want to go and see them."

"I don't know. In fact, I took care not to know, that I mightn't be able to tell you."

"But why?"

"Never mind why. I don't know where they are, and couldn't tell you if I would."

Richard turned angrily away, and went to his room, weary and annoyed.

In the morning his mother said to him—

"Richard, I can't bear there should be any misunderstanding between you and me! The moment you are one-and-twenty, ask me and I will tell you why I would not have you knowing those people. Believe me, I was right to stop it, for fear of what might follow."

"If you are afraid of my falling in love with a girl you don't think good enough for me, you have taken the wrong way to keep me from thinking about her, mother. You remember the costermonger whose family quarrelled with him for marrying beneath him? If a girl be a good girl, she is good for me,

whether she be the daughter of a cats'-meat-man or of a royal duke! I know that's not the way people who call themselves Christians think! They want, of course, to keep up the selfishness of the breed!"

It was horribly rude, and Jane burst into tears. Richard's heart softened. It is well our hearts are sometimes in advance of our consciences—we are so slow to recognize injustice in defence of the right! Richard's wrong to his mother was a lack of faith in her. Where he did not understand and she would not explain, he did not even give her the benefit of the doubt. He treated her just as many of us, calling ourselves Christians, treat the Father—not in words, perhaps, or even in definite thoughts, but in feelings and actions.

"You will be sorry for this one day, Richard!" she sobbed. "Whatever I do is from care over you!"

"To wrong another for my sake, never can be any good to me. If money wrong-got be a curse, so is any good wrong-got."

"You won't trust me, Richard! My own father is a blacksmith: why should I look down upon a dressmaker?"

"That's just what I think, mother!—Why?"

"I don't!" returned Mrs. Tuke—and there she paused: another step might bring her to the edge of the gulf!

Richard looked at her moodily for a moment, then turned away to the workshop; where, after his ill success with his mother, he was hardly less disinclined to challenge his father than before, for he knew him inexpugnable.

CHAPTER XII.

MORTGRANGE.

In the spring came a letter from young Lestrange, through Simon Armour, asking Richard upon what terms he would undertake the work wanted in the library.

He handed the letter to his father, and they held a consultation.

"There's this to be considered," said the bookbinder, "that, if you go there, you lose your connection here—in a measure, at least. Therefore you cannot do the work at the same rate as in your own shop."

"On the other hand, I should have my keep."

"That is true, and of course is something; but I think it may fairly be held to do no more than make up for the advantages of living in London—your classes, for instance."

"Anyhow I must be paid so much a month, and do what I can in the time. I couldn't charge by the individual job in a man's own house!—The thing I am afraid of is, that, not knowing the niceties of the work, they may fancy I don't do enough."

"In the other way they would fancy you charged too much, and that would come to the same thing!—But they will at least discover that you keep to your hours and stick to your work!—We must calculate by what the best hands in the trade get a week!"

The terms they concluded to ask appeared to Lestrange reasonable. He proposed then that Richard should bind himself for not less than a year, while Lestrange reserved the right of giving him a month's notice; and these points being willingly assented to by Richard, an agreement was drawn up and signed —much to the satisfaction of Simon Armour, whose first thought was that the work would not be too hard for Richard to want a little exercise at the forge after hours. Richard, however, well as he liked the anvil, was not so sure about this: there might be books to read after he had done his day's duty by their garments! He had half laid out for himself a plan of study in his leisure time, he said.

It was a lovely evening when he arrived at Mortgrange from his grandfather's. He was shown to his new quarters in the old mansion by the housekeeper, an elderly, worthy creature, with the air of a hostess. She liked the young man; the honest friendliness of his carriage pleased her. He was handsome too, though not strikingly so, and his expression was better than any handsomeness, inspiring the honest with confidence, and giving little hope to the designing. His brave outlook, not bold so much as fearless, and his ready smile, seemed those of a man more prepared than eager to do his part in the world. He was well set up, and of good figure, for the slight roundness of his shoulders had almost disappeared. The poise of his head, and the proportions of his limbs, left nothing to be desired. His foster-parents had encouraged him in every manly exercise, for they were wise enough to have regard to the impression he must make at first sight: they would have it easy to believe that he might be what

There is cause enough, man at least knows, but essential reason at the heart of its existence there is none! Whence, then, comes this mistake, this sadness?" he went on with himself. "Why should there be so much of it in the world? Is it that, as for all other good things, a man must put forth his will for joy? It is plain a man must assert what is highest in him, else he cannot lay hold of the best: must a man will to be glad, else deserve to be sorrowful?" He began to whistle. "I will be glad!" he said, "even in the midst of a world of rain!—Yet again, why should the mere look of a rainy night make it needful for me to assert joy and resist sadness?—After all, what is there to be merry about, in this best of possible worlds? I like going to the theater; but if I don't like the play, am I to be pleased all the same, sit it out with smiles, and applaud at the end? I don't see what there is to make me miserable, and I don't see what there is to make me glad!"

Would it have cast any light either on Richard's gloom or his perplexity, had he been told that, in the place where he stood staring out on the gray, formless twilight, his mother had often sought refuge, and tasted the comfort of an assuagement of splendor. She had not appropriated the room, and it was some time before the household knew that she was in the way of going there: it was awkwardly situated in a remote part of the house and rarely used—which made its attraction for Lady Lestrange. But the faithful sister did not forget where she had once found her on her knees weeping, and chose it for herself and her charge when she was gone.

In a few minutes Richard arrived at the conclusion that he would be all right as soon as he got

among the wine-bins of the library. He did not reflect how little of a man is he whose sense of well-being is at the mercy of a Scotch mist or a cloudy twilight. Neither did he put to himself the question whether the mending of the old leather bottles in which lie stored the varied wines of the human spirit, ought to be labor and gladness enough for the soul of a man. It is a poor substitute for food that helps us to forget the want of it. But how can we wonder when he would have no father, and claimed the black Negation, the grandmother of Chaos, as his mother! Yet was it the presence all the time of that father he refused that made it possible for him to drink the water of any poorest little well of salvation that sprang in the field of his life; and such a well was his work among books.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BEECH-TREE.

He went to bed, and after a dreamless night, rose to find the world overflowed with bliss. The sun was at his best, and every water-drop on the grass was shining all the colors of the rainbow. Surely the gems that are dug from the earth have their prototype in the dew-drops that lie on its surface. One might in a moment of sweet maundering imagine Nature hiding those sunless dew-drops of the mines in the darkness of a sweet sorrow that the youth of the morning must be so evanescent.

The whole world lay before Richard his inheritance. The sunlight gave it him, a gift from the height of his heaven. What was it to Richard that the park, its trees, its grass, its dew-drops, its cattle, its shadows, belonged to Sir Wilton! He never even thought of the fact! He felt them his own! Was the soft, clear, fresh, damp air, with all the unreachable soul of it, not his, because it was Sir Wilton's?

The highest property, as Dante tells us, increases to each by the sharing of it with others. But the common mind does not care for such property. Was not the blue, uplifted, hoping sky, that spoke to the sky inside Richard—was not that Sir Wilton's? Yes, indeed; for were it not Sir Wilton's, it could not be Richard's. But Sir Wilton did not claim it, because he did not care for it, heard no sound of the

speech it uttered. Happy would it have been for Sir Wilton, that anything he called his, was his as it was Richard's! He could not prevent Richard from possessing Mortgrange in a way he himself did not and would not possess it. But neither yet were they Richard's in the full eternal way. Nature was a noble lady whose long visit made him glad; she was not yet at her own home in his house. There were things in the world that might come in and drive her out. Say rather, there was yet no chamber in that house in which she could take up her dwelling all night.

The setting sun had made Richard sad; his resurrection made him blessed! He dressed in haste, and went to find his way from the house.

Arrived in the park, and walking in cool delight on the wet grass, he began to think about the men and the races whom the greed of other men and race had pinched and shouldered and squeezed from the world. He thought of the men who, by preventing others and refusing to let them share, imagine to increase the length and breadth and depth of their own possessing; and thus by degrees he fell into a retributive mood. What should, what could, what would be done with such men?

"As they refuse their neighbors ground to stand upon," he said to himself, "as the very cubic space they cannot disrobe them of they begrudge them because it measures from what they count their land. I should like to know how high their possession goes! Is there any law that lays that down? To what point above him can the landowner complain of trespass in the gliding or hovering balloon? When hawking comes in again, as it will one day,

by the law of revival, at what height will another man's falcon be an intruder on him who stands gazing up from his corn? Were I a power in the universe, I would cram the air over the heads of such incarnate greeds with clouds of souls! The sun should reach them only through the vapors of other life than theirs, inimical to them because of their selfishness. I would set the dead burrowing beneath them, so that the land they boast should heave under their feet with the writhing of the bodies they drove from the surface into the deeps. They should have but a carpet, wallowing in the waves of a continuous live earthquake. I know I am thinking like a fool; but surely at least there ought to be some set season for Truth and Justice to return to the forsaken earth! Are we forever to bear without hope the presence of the cruel, the vulgar self-souled, the neighbor-crushing rich? Are the wicked the favorites of Nature, that they flourish like a green bay-tree? Doubtless it is right to forgive—but how to be able? Nobody has ever done me any harm yet; I have nothing to complain of; it cannot be revenge in me that longs for something, call it God, or Nature, or Justice, that will repay!—God it cannot be; but something sure there must be to which vengeance belongs!"

He might have gone further in his thinking, and perhaps come to ask what satisfaction there could be in any vengeance, so long as the evil-doer remained unhumbled by the perception and the shame of his doing, was neither sorry for it nor turned away from it—in a word, did not repent; but there came an interruption.

He was walking slowly along, unheeding where he

went, when he heard a sound that made him look up. Then he saw that he was under a great beech, and the sound seemed to come from somewhere in the top of it—a sound like the pleased cooing of a dove. He looked hard into the branches and their wilderness of fresh leaves, but could descry nothing. Then came a little laugh, and with a preparatory rustling and rustling in its passage, a book—a small folio—fell plump at his feet.

"Will you please put it in the library!" said a voice he had heard before—long before, it seemed—but had not forgotten.

"I will bring it to you—at least I would, if I could see where you are!" answered Richard, gazing with yet keener search into the thick mass of leaf-cloud over his head.

"No, no; I don't want more of it. I can't see you, and don't know who you are; but please take the book, and lay it on the middle table in the library. It may be hurt, and I don't want to come down just yet."

"Very well, miss!" answered Richard; "I will. —The fall from such a height, and through all those branches, must have done it quite enough harm already!"

"Oh!—I never thought of that!" said the voice.

Richard took up the book, and walked away with it, pondering.

"Is it possible," he said to himself, "that the little lady, whose big mare I shod last year, is up there in that tree? It must be her voice!—I cannot, surely, be mistaken!—But how on earth, or rather how in heaven, did she get up? Yet why shouldn't she climb as well as any other? It must be as easy as

riding that huge mare. And then she's not like other ladies! She's not of the ordinary breed of this planet! Which of them would have spoken to a blacksmith-lad as she spoke to me! Who but herself would have tied up a scratch in a working man's hand!"

He was right so far: she could climb as no other in that county, no other, perhaps, in England, man or boy or girl, could climb. She was like a squirrel at climbing; and for the last few mornings, the weather having grown decidedly summery, had gone before breakfast to say her prayers in that tree.

Richard carried the book to the house—it was Pope's Letters—found his way to the library, and laid it where she said, hoping she would come to seek it, and that he might then be present. Would she recognize the fellow that shod her mare? he wondered.

He could do nothing till he knew where he was to work, and therefore, after breakfast in the servants' hall, he asked one of the men to let him know when Mr. Lestrange would see him, and went to his room.

Richard had not yet become aware of any moral pressure. The duty of aspiration or self-conquest had never in any shape been forced upon him, and his conscience had not made him acquainted with it. What is called a good conscience is often but a dull one that gives no trouble when it ought to bark loudest; but Richard's was not of that sort, and yet was very much at ease. I may say for him that he had done nothing he knew to be bad at the moment; and very little that he had to be ashamed of afterwards, either at school or since he left it. Partly

through the care of his parents, he had never got into what is called bad company, had formed no undesirable intimacies. He had a natural cleanliness, a natural sense of the becoming, which did much to keep him from evil: he could not consent to regard himself with disgust, and he would have been easily disgusted with himself. If he did not, as I have indicated, set himself with any conscious effort to rise above himself, he did do something against sinking below himself. The books he chose were almost all of the better sort. He had instinctively laid aside some in which he recognized a degrading influence.

But here let me remark that it depends partly on the degree of a man's moral development, whether this or that book will be to him degrading or otherwise. A book which one man ought to scorn may be of elevating tendency to another, because it is a little above his present moral condition. A book which to enjoy would harm a more delicate mind, may *perhaps* benefit the nature that would have chosen a coarser book still. We cannot determine the operation of energies, when we do not know on what moral level they are at work. The dead may be left to bury their dead; it would be sad to see an angel haunting a charnel-house.

I have been led into this digression through the desire to give an approximate idea of the good, rather vacant, unselfish, and yet self-contented, if not self-satisfied condition of Richard's being.

He got out a manuscript-book in which he was in the habit of setting down whatever came to him, and wrote for some time, happily making more than one spot of ink on the toilet-cover, which served to open the eyes of Mrs. Locke to her mistake in think-

ing a workman would not want a writing-table; so that before the next evening he found in his chamber everything comfortable for writing, as well as for sleeping and dressing.

He was interrupted by the entrance of a servant with the message that Mr. Lestrange was in the morning-room, and wished to see him.

He followed the man and found Lestrange at the breakfast-table, with a tall young woman, very ordinary-looking, except for her large soft, dark eyes, and the little lady whose mare he had shod, and whose voice he had heard that morning heard from the tree-top.

He advanced half-way to the table, and stood.

"Ah, there you are!" said Lestrange, glancing up, and immediately reverting to his plate. "We've got to set to work, haven't we?"

He had, I presume, found the ladies not uninterested in the restoration that was about to be initiated, and had therefore sent for Richard while breakfast was going on.

The fledgling baronet, except for his too favorable opinion of himself, in which he was unlike only a very few, and an amount of assumption not small toward his supposed inferiors, was not a disagreeable human, and now spoke pleasantly.

"Yes, sir," answered Richard. "Shall I wait outside until you have done breakfast?"

He feared the servant might have make a mistake.

"I sent for you," replied Lestrange, curtly.

"Very well, sir. I have not yet learned whether the tools I sent on have been delivered, but there will be plenty to do in the way of preparation.—May I ask if you have settled where I am to work, sir?"

"Ah, I had not thought of that!"

"It seems to me, sir, that the library itself would suit best; that is, if I might have a good-sized kitchen-table in it, and roll up half the carpet. When I had to beat a book I could take it into the passage, or just outside the window. Nothing else would make any dust."

Lestrange had been thinking how to have the binder under his eye, and yet not seem to watch a fellow so much above his notion of a working man; the family made very little use of the library, and Richard's proposal seemed just the thing. He would be sure to stick to his work where some one might any moment be coming in!

"I don't see any difficulty," he answered.

"I should want a little fire for my glue-pot and polishing-iron. There will be gilding and lettering too, though I hope not much—title-pieces to replace, and a touch here and there to give to the tooling! No man with any reverence in him would meddle much with such delicate, lovely old things as many of these gildings! He would not dare more than just touch them!"

The little lady sat eating her toast, but losing no word that was said. She knew from his voice the young man was the same to whom she had called out of the beech-tree; but now she seemed to recognize him as the blacksmith whose hand she had bound up: what could a blacksmith do in a library? She was puzzled.

Richard noted that she was dressed in some green stuff, which perhaps was the cause of his having been unable to discover her in the tree! Her great eyes—they were bigger than those of the tall lady—

every now and then looked up at him with a renewed question, to which they seemed to find no answer. They were big blue eyes—very dark for blue, and rather too round for perfection ; but their roundness was at one with the prevailing expression of her face, which was innocent daring, inquiry, and confidence. The paleness of it was a healthy paleness, with just an inclination to freckle. Her dark, half-scorched-looking hair was so abundant and rebellious, that it had to be all over compelled with gold pins. Its manipulation had neither beginning, middle nor end. She ate daintily enough, but as if she meant to have a breakfast that should last her till luncheon—when plainly the active little furnace of her life would want fresh fuel. But it was of another kind of fuel she was thinking now. In the man who stood there, so independent, yet so free from self-assertion, she saw a prospect of learning something. She was hungry after knowing, but, though fond of reading, was very ignorant of books. She thought like a poet, but had never read a real poem. She was full of imagination, but very imperfectly knew what the word meant. She had never in her life read a work of genuine imagination—not even *Undine*, not even *The Ugly Duckling*.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LIBRARY.

After some talk, it was settled that Richard should work in the large oriel of the library. Mrs. Locke was called, and the necessary orders were given. Employer and workman were both anxious, the one to see, the other to make a commencement. In a few minutes Richard had looked out as many of the books in most need of attention as would keep him, turning from the one to the other, as each required time in the press or to dry, thoroughly employed.

"There is a volume here I should like to know your mind about, sir," he said, after looking at one of them a moment or two, "—the first collected edition of Spenser's works, actually bound up with Sir John Harrington's translation of Ariosto! If it were a good, or even an old binding, I should have said nothing."

"It don't seem in a bad way."

"No, but the one book is so unworthy of the other!"

"What would you propose?"

"I would separate them; put the Spenser in plain calf, and make the present cover, with a new back, do for Sir John; it is a good enough coat for him."

"Very well. Do as you think best."

"I should like to send them both to my father."

"But you have undertaken everything!"

"I am quite ready, sir; but in that case these must wait. My faculty is best laid out on mending, and I must do some good work in that first. I don't know that I'm quite up to my father in binding. I mentioned him because if he were to help me with those that must be bound, I should have the more time for what often takes longer. You may trust my father, sir; he does not want to make a fortune."

"I will try him then," answered the cautious heir. "At least I will send him the books, and learn what he would charge."

He had more of the ordinary tradesman in him than Richard and his uncle put together.

"I will put the prices on them, and engage that my father will charge no more," said Richard.

Lestrange was content on hearing them, and Richard set to work with the other volumes.

The bookbinder, always busy, soon began to be respected in the house, and before long had gained several indulgences—among the rest, to have a table for himself in the library, at which, when work-hours were over, he might read or write when he pleased. As his labors went on, the *bookscape* began to revive, and continued slowly putting on an autumnal radiance of light and color. Dingy and broken backs gradually disappeared. Pamphlets and magazines, such as, from knowledge or inquiry, Richard thought worth the expense, were sent off to his father to be bound. But I must continue my narrative from a point long before his work began to make much of a show.

A few valuable books, much injured by time and rough usage,—among the rest a quarto of *The Merry Wives*—he had pulled apart, and was treating with

certain solutions, in preparation for binding them, when Lestrange came in one morning, accompanied by the curate of the parish. His eyes fell on a loose title-page which he happened to know.

"What on earth are you doing?" he cried. "You will destroy that book! By Jove!—You little know what you're about!"

"I do know what I am about, sir. I shall do the book nothing but good," answered Richard. "It could not have lasted many years without what I am doing."

"Leave it alone," said Lestrange. "I must ask some one. The treatment is too dangerous."

"Excuse me, sir; the treatment is by no means dangerous. After this bath, I shall take it through one of thin size, to help the paper to hold together. The book has suffered much, both from damp and insects."

"No matter!" answered Lestrange, imperiously. "I will not have you meddle further with that volume.—Would you believe it, Hardy," he went on turning to the curate, "it is that translation of Ovid he is experimenting upon!"

"I beg your pardon, I am not experimenting," said Richard.

"I hardly think it is such a very rare book!" replied the curate. "I believe it *could* be replaced!"

"Ah, you don't know, I see! I thought I had shown you!" returned Lestrange excitedly. "Look there!"

He pointed to the title-page, which was lying on the table.

"I see!" said Hardy. "It is a first edition—in black letter—of Arthur Golding's Ovid!"

"But you don't look! Why don't you look? Have you no eyes for that faded ink just under the title?"

"Why! What's this? *Gul. Shaksper!*—Is it possible!"

"You find it hard to believe your eyes, and well you may!—There, Tuke! I told you you didn't know what you were doing!"

"I always examine the title-page of a book," answered Richard. "You must allow me to do as I see fit, Mr. Lestrange, or I give up the job."

"You undertook to work for a year, if required!"

"I did not undertake to receive orders as to my mode of working. I care for books far too much for that. Besides, I have my character to see to! I warn you that if I do not go on with that volume, it will be ruined."

"You don't consider the money you risk!—That name makes the book worth hundreds at least."

"It is the greatest of names! Only that name was not written by him who owned it!"

"What do you know about it!" said Lestrange, rudely.

"Are you an expert?" asked the curate.

"By no means," answered Richard; "but I have been a good deal with old books, and my impression is you have got there one of the Ireland forgeries!"

"I believe it to be quite genuine!" said Lestrange.

"If it be, there is the more reason in what I am doing, sir."

Lestrange turned abruptly to the curate, saying—

"Come along, Hardy! I can't bear to see the butchery!"

"Depend on it," returned the curate laughing, "the surgeon knows his knife!—You *know* what you're about, don't you, Mr. Tuke?"

"If I did not, sir, I wouldn't meddle with a book like that, forgery or no forgery! You should see the quantities of old print I've destroyed in learning how to save such books!—This is no vile body to experiment upon!"

"Mr. Lestrange, you may trust that man!" said the curate.

CHAPTER XV.

BARBARA WYLDER.

It was the height of the season, and Sir Wilton and Lady Ann were in London—I cannot say *enjoying themselves*, for I doubt if either of them ever enjoyed self, or anything else. Their daughters were at home, in the care of the governess. Theodora had been out a year or two, but preferred Mortgrange to London. She was one of the few girls—perhaps not very few—who imagine themselves uglier than they are. Miss Malliver, the governess, was a lady of uncertain age, for whom Lady Ann had an uncertain liking. The younger girl her pupil, was named Victoria, but commonly called Vic, and not uncommonly Vixen. The younger boy was at school, where they were constantly threatening to send him home. He had been already dismissed from Eton.

In their elder son, Arthur, his parents had as perfect a confidence as such parents could have in any son.

The little lady that rode the great mare, and sat in the beech-tree, was at present their guest—as she often was, in a fluctuating or intermittent fashion. She lived in the neighborhood, but was more at Mortgrange than at home; one consequence of which was, that, as would-be-clever Miss Malliver phrased it, the house was very much B. Wyldered. Nor was that the first house the little lady had bewildered, for she was indeed an importation from a new colony

rather startling to sedate old England. Her father, a younger son, had unexpectedly succeeded to the family-property, a few miles from Mortgrange. He was supposed to have made a fortune in New Zealand, where Barbara was born and brought up. They had been home nearly two years, and she was almost eighteen. Absurd rumors were abroad concerning their wealth, but there were no great signs of wealth about the place. Wylder Hall was kept up, and its life went on in good style, it is true, but mainly because the old servants perpetuated the customs of the house.

The squire was said to have shared in some of the roughest phases of colonial life. Whether he was better or worse for falling in love with the money of an older colonist, and marrying his daughter, it is certain that, for a time at least, he grew a shade or two more respectable. Far from being a woman of refinement, she had more character and more strength than he, and brought him, not indeed into the high-ways of wisdom, but into certain by-paths of prudence.

Upon his return to his native country they were everywhere received; but had it not been for their reported wealth, I doubt if the ladies of the county, after some experience of her manners and speech, which were at times very rough, would have continued to call on Mrs. Wylder.

But everybody liked Barbara; and nobody could think how such a flower should have come of two such plants. She seemed to regard every one as of her own family. People were her property—hers to love! And her brain was as active as her heart, and constantly with it. She wanted to know what people thought and felt and imagined; what everything was;

how a thing was done, and how it ought to be done. She seemed to understand what the animals were thinking, and what the flowers were feeling. She had from infancy spent the greater part of her life, both night and day, in the open air; and, having no companion, had sought the acquaintance of every live thing she saw—often to the disgust of her mother, and occasionally to the annoyance of her father. She was a child of the whole world, as the naiad is the child of the river, and the oread of the mountain. She could sit a horse's bare back even better than a saddle, could guide him almost as well with a halter as with a bridle, and in general control him without either, though she had ridden more than one horse with terrible bit and spurs. She did not remember the time when she could not swim, and she tried her own running against every new horse, to find what he could do. Some highland girl might perhaps have beaten her, up hill, but I doubt it. She was so small that she looked fragile, but she had nerves such as few men can boast, and muscles like steel. It never occurred to her not to say what she thought, believed, or felt; she would show favor or dislike with equal readiness; and give the reason for anything she did as willingly as do the thing. She was a special favorite at Mortgrange. Not only did she bewitch the *blase* man of the world, Sir Wilton, but the cold eye of his lady would gleam a faint gleam at the thought of her dowry. Her father "prospected" a little for something higher than a mere baronetcy, but he had in no way interfered. Of herself, divine little savage, she would never have thought of love until she fell in love: a flower cannot know its own blossom until it comes. It did not yet interest her, and

until it did, certainly marriage never would. Thus was she healthier-minded than any one born of society-parents, and brought up under the influences of nurse-morality, can well be. When she came to England it was hard to teach her the ways of the so-called civilized. Servants would sometimes be out searching for her after midnight, perhaps to find her strayed beyond the park, out upon the solitary heath. She knew most of the stars, not by their astronomical names indeed, but by names she had herself given them. She had tales of her own, fashioned in part from the wild myths of the aborigines, to account for the special relations of such as made a group. She would weave the travels of the planets into the steady history of the motionless stars. Waning and waxing moons had a special and strange influence upon her. She would dart out of doors the moment she saw the new moon, and give a wild cry of joy if the old moon was in her arms. Any moon in a gusty night, with a scud of torn clouds, would wake in her an ecstasy. Her old nurse, who had come with her—a strange creature, of what mingled blood no one knew—told of her that she was sometimes seized with such a longing for the ocean, that she would lie for hours ere she went to sleep, moaning with the very moan of its pebble-margined waves. When "in the bush," she would upon occasion wander about from morning to night. No trouble able to keep her still had ever yet laid hold of her. But she had grown neither coarse nor unfeeling through lack of human intercourse. Nature was to her what she was to Wordsworth's Lucy, and made her a lady of her own.

As to what is commonly called education, she had not had the best. Since coming to England, she had

had governesses, but none fit for the office. Not merely had no one of them that rare gift, the teaching-genius —the faculty of waking hunger and thirst; that would have mattered little, for Barbara needed no such rousing; she was eager to know, and yet more eager to understand; but not one of those teachers knew enough to answer a quarter of Barbara's questions, or was even capable of perceiving that those she could not answer, pointed to anything worth knowing.

Among fashionable girls, affecting a free and easy, or even rough style, Barbara was notable for a sweet, unconscious, graceful daring, never for even a playful rudeness. Nothing she ever did or said or attempted could be called rough, while yet she would say things to make a vulgar duchess stare. Had she been affected, she would have drawn fools and repelled men; real, she charmed alike men and fools.

She had read few books worth reading—had read a few which one would not have chosen she should read, for she grasped at anything a passer-by might have left. Of books properly so called, she knew nothing, therefore had not a notion which to read now she might choose. She imagined them all attractive—but at the first assay turned from the burlesque with a kind of loathing. This made some of her new acquaintance, not refined enough to understand the peculiarity, as it seemed to them, set her down as stupid.

As to religion, she had never been taught any. But from before her earliest recollection she had had the feeling of a Presence. For this feeling she never thought of attempting to account, neither would have recognized it as what I have called it. The sky over her head brought it; a sweep of the earth away from

her feet would bring it; any horizon far or near called it up, perhaps most keenly of all. In England she often sorely missed her horizon, and in cities was even unhappy for lack of one. If she could have crystallized, and then formulated her feeling, she would have said she felt lonely, that something or somebody had gone away. Had she been a pagan, it would have been her gods that had forsaken her. Without a horizon she felt as if the wind had forgotten her, the sky did not know her. Often indeed even the farthest horizon could not prevent her from feeling that she had come to a dead country; that things here did not mean anything; that the life was out of them. Was the world so crowded with men and their works as to shut out from her the Presence? When she went to church, nothing received her, nothing came near her, nothing brought her any message. Something was done, she supposed, that ought to be done—something she had no inclination to dispute, no interest in questioning: a certain good power called God, required from people, in return for the gift of existence, the attention of going to church; therefore she went sometimes. She had no idea of ever having done wrong, no feeling that God was pleased or displeased with her, or had any occasion to be either. She did not know that it was God that came near her in her horse, in her dog, in the people about her who so often disappointed her. He came nearer in a thunderstorm, a moonlit night, a sweet wind—anything that woke the sense of the old freedom of her childhood. She felt the presence then, but never knew it a presence.

Neither did she know that there was a place where the very essence of that whose loss made her sad

was always waiting her—a place called in a certain old book "thy closet." She did not know that there opened the one horizon—infinitely far, yet near as her own heart. But he is there for them that seek him, not for those who do not look for him. Till they do, all he can do is to make them feel the want of him. Barbara had not begun to seek him. She did not know there was anybody to seek: she only missed him without knowing what she missed. The blind, almost meaningless reverence for the name of God, which somehow she learned at church, had not led her in any way to associate him with her sense of loss and need.

Her father's desire was to see her so married as to raise his influence in the county. He was proud of her—selfishly proud. Was she not his? Was he not "the author of her being?" If he did not quite imagine he had created her, he certainly never thought of any one but himself as having to do with her existence. All the credit in it was his! He forgot even what share her mother might claim; not to mention what in her might belong to the Sum of Things, the insensate Pan. A self-glorious man is the biggest fool in the world.

Her mother, too, was proud of her—loved her indeed after a careless fashion—was even in a sort obliged to her for having come to her. But she did not care for her enough to interfere with her. Notwithstanding the mother's coarseness, her outbursts of temper, her intolerance of opposition, she and her daughter had never yet come into collision. The reason did not entirely lie in the sweetness of the daughter, but partly in the fact that the mother had

two children besides, one of whom she loved far more, and the other far less.

Barbara had no pride. She spoke in the same tone to lord and tradesman. She had been the champion of the blacks in her own country, and in England looked lovingly on the gypsies in their little tents on the windy downs.

CHAPTER XVI.

BARBARA AND RICHARD.

HARDLY had Lestrange left the room, when Barbara entered, noiseless as a moth, which creature she somehow resembled at times: one observant friend came to see that she resembled all swift, gay, and gentle creatures in turn. She was in the same green dress which had favored her concealment in the beech, and in which Richard had seen her afterward at the breakfast-table, but of which he had not since caught a glimmer. Her blue eyes—at times they seemed black, but they were blue—settled upon Richard the moment she entered, and resting on him seemed to lead her up to the table where he was at work.

"What have you done to make Arthur so angry?" she said, her manner as if they had known each other all their lives.

"What I am doing now, miss—making this book last a hundred years longer."

"Why should you, if he doesn't want you to do it? The book is his!"

"He will be pleased enough by and by. It's only that he thinks I can't, and is afraid I shall ruin it."

"Hadn't you better leave it then?"

"That would be to ruin it. I have gone too far for that."

"Why should you want to make it last so long?

They are always printing books over again, and a new book is much nicer than an old one."

"So some people think; but others would much rather read a book in its first shape. And then books get so changed by printers and editors, that it is absolutely necessary to have copies of them as they were at first. You see this little book, miss? It don't look much, does it?"

"It looks miserable—and so dirty!"

"By the time I have done with it, it will be worth fifty, perhaps a hundred pounds—I don't know exactly. It is a play of Shakspere's as published in his lifetime."

"But they print better and more correctly now, don't they?"

"Yes; but as I said, they often change things."

"How is that?"

"Sometimes they will change a word, thinking it ought to be another; sometimes they will alter a passage because they do not understand it, putting it all wrong, and throwing aside a great meaning for a small one: the change of a letter may alter the whole idea. But they often do it just by blundering. Shall I tell you an instance that came to my knowledge yesterday? It is but a trifle, yet is worth telling.—Of course you know the *Idylls of the King*?"

"No, I don't. Why do you say 'of course'?"

"Because I thought every English lady read Tennyson."

"Ah, but I was born in New Zealand!—Tell me the blunder, though."

"There was one thing in *The Passing of Arthur*—that's the name of one of the Idylls—which I never could understand:—how Sir Bedivere could throw a

sword with both hands, and make it go in the way Tennyson says it went."

"But who was Sir Bedivere?"

"You must read the poem to know that, miss. He was one of the knights of King Arthur's Round Table."

"I don't know anything about King Arthur."

"I will repeat as much of the poem as is necessary to make you understand about the misprint."

"Do—*please.*"

"Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightning in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur."

"What does *the brand Excalibur*—is that it?—what does it mean? They put a brand on the cattle in the bush."

"*Brand* means a sword, and *Excalibur* was the name of this sword. They seem to have baptized their swords in those days?"

"There's nothing about *both hands!*"

"True; that comes a little lower down, where Sir Bedivere tells King Arthur what he has done. He says—

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him.

—Now do you think anybody could do that, and make it go flashing round and round in an arch?"

Barbara thought for a moment, then said—

"No, certainly not. To make it go like that, you would have to take it in one hand, and swing it round your head—and then you couldn't without a string tied to it. Or perhaps it was a sabre, and he was so strong he could send it like a boomerang!"

"No; it was a straight, big, heavy sword.—How then do you think Tennyson came to describe the thing so?"

"Because he didn't know better—or didn't think enough about it."

"There is more than that in it, I fancy: he was misled by a printer's blunder, I suspect. Some months ago I found the passage which Tennyson seems to follow, in a cheap reprint of Sir Thomas Malory's History of King Arthur—then just out, and could not make sense of it. Yesterday I found here this long little book, evidently the edition from which the other was printed—and printed correctly too. In both issues, this is what the knight is made to say:

Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up and went to the water's side, and there he bound the girdle about the belts. And then he threw the sword into the water as far as he might."

"Well," said Barbara, "you have not made me any wiser! You said the new one was printed correctly from that old one!"

"But I did not say the old one, as you call it, was itself printed correctly from the much older one! Look here now," continued Richard—and mounting the library-steps, he took down another small volume, very like the former, "—here is another edition, of nearly the same date: let me read what is printed there:—

Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water's side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilt. And then he threw the sword into the water as far as he might.

"Now, most likely the copy from which both of these editions were printed had the word *hilts*, for then they always spoke of the *hilts*, not *hilt* of a sword; and the one printer modernized it into *hilt*, and the other, perhaps mistaking the dim print, for *hilts* printed *belts*. To tie the girdle about the *belts* must simply be nonsense. But to tie the girdle to the hilts of the sword would just give the knight what you said he would want—something long to swing it round his head with, and throw it like a stone, and the sling with it."

"I understand.

"You see then how the printer's blunder, which might not appear to matter much, has come to matter a great deal, for it has, it seems to me, caused a fault-spot in the loveliest poem!"

During this conversation Richard's work had scarcely relaxed; but now that a pause came it seemed to gather diligence.

"Why do you spend your time patching up books?" said Barbara.

"Because they are worth patching up; and because I earn my bread by patching them."

"But you seem to care most for what is inside them!"

"If I did not, I should never have taken to mending, I should have been content with binding them. New covers make more show, and are much easier put on than patches."

Another pause followed.

"What a lot you know!" said Barbara.

"Very little," answered Richard.

"Then where am I?" she returned.

"Perhaps ladies don't need books! I don't know about ladies."

"I think they don't care about them. I never hear them talk as you do—as if books were their friends. But why should they? Books are only books!"

"You would not say that if once you knew them!"

"I wish you would make me know them, then!"

"There are books, and you can read, miss!"

"Ah, but I can't read as you read! I understand that much! I was born where there ain't any books. I can shoot and fish and run and ride and swim, and all that kind of thing. I never had to fight. I *think* I could shoe a horse, if any one would give me a lesson or two."

"I will with pleasure, miss."

"Oh, thank you. That will be jolly! But how is it you can do everything?"

"I can only do one or two things. I can shoe a horse, but I never had the chance of riding one."

"Teach me to shoe Miss Brown, and I will teach you to ride her. How is your hand?"

"Quite well, thank you."

"I would rather learn to read, though—the right way, I mean—the way that makes one book talk to another."

"That would be better than shoeing Miss Brown; but I will teach you both, if you care to learn."

"Thank you indeed! When shall we begin?"

"When you please."

"Now?"

"I cannot before six o'clock. I must do first what I am paid to do!—What kind of reading do you like best?"

"I don't know any best. I used to read the papers to papa, but now I don't even do that. I hope I never may."

"Where do you live, miss, when you're at home?" asked Richard, all the time busy with the quarto.

"Don't you know?"

"I don't even know who you are, miss!"

"I am Barbara Wylder. I live at Wylder Hall, a few miles from here.—I don't know the distance exactly, because I always go across country: that way reminds me a little of home. My father was the third son, and never expected to have the Hall. He went out to New Zealand, and married my mother, and made a fortune—at least people say so: he never tells me anything. They don't care much for me: I'm not a boy!"

"Have you any brothers?"

"I have one," she answered sadly. "I had two, but my mother's favorite is gone, and my father's is left, and mamma can't get over it. They were twins, but they did not love each other. How could they? My father and mother don't love each other, so each loved one of the twins and hated the other."

She mentioned the dismal fact with a strange nonchalance—as if the thing could no more be helped, and needed no more be wondered at, than a rainy day. Yet the sigh she gave indicated trouble because of it.

Richard held his peace, rather astonished, both

that a lady should talk to him in such an easy way, and that she should tell him the saddest family secrets. But she seemed quite unaware of doing anything strange, and after a brief pause resumed.

"Yes, they had long been tired of each other," she said, as if she had been reflecting anew on the matter, "but the quarrelling came all of taking sides about the twins! At least I do not remember any of it before that. They were both fine children, and they could not agree which was the finer, but, as the boys grew, quarrelled more and more about them. They would be at it whole evenings, each asserting the merits of one of the twins, and neither listening to a word about the other. Each was determined not to be convinced, and each called the other obstinate."

"Were the twins older or younger than you, miss?" asked Richard.

"They were three years younger than me. But when I look back it seems as if I had been born into the bickering. It always looked as natural as the grassy slopes outside the door. I thought it was a consequence of twins, that all parents with twins went on so. When my father's next older brother fell ill, and there seemed a possibility of his succeeding to the property, the thing grew worse; now it was which of them should be heir to it. Waking in the middle of the night, I would hear them going on at it. Then which was the elder, no one could tell. My mother had again and again, before they began to quarrel, confessed she did not know. I don't think I ever saw either of my parents do a kindness to the other, or to the child favored by the other. So from the first the boys understood that they were enemies, and acted accordingly. Each

always wanted everything for himself. They scowled at each other long before they could talk. Their games, always games of rivalry and strife, would for a minute or two, make them a little less hostile; but the moment the game ceased, they began to scowl again. They were both kind to me, and I loved them both, and naturally tried to make them love each other; but it was of no use. It seemed their calling to rival and obstruct one another. When they came to blows, as they frequently did, my father and mother would almost come to blows too, each at once taking the usual side. I would run away then, put a piece of bread in my pocket, and get on a horse. Nobody ever missed me."

"Did you never lose your way?" asked Richard: he must say something, he felt so embarrassed.

"My horse always knew the way home. I have often been out all night, though; and how peaceful it was to be alone with Widow Wind, as I used to call the night!—I don't know why now; I suppose I once knew."

Something in this way she ran on with her story, but I fail to approach the charm of her telling. Her narrative was almost childish in its utterance, but childlike in its insight. What could have moved her so to confide in a stranger and a workman? In truth, she needed little moving; her nature was to trust everybody; but there were not many to whom she could talk. Miss Brown helped her with no response; to her parents she had no impulse to speak; the young people she met stared at the least allusion to the wild ways of her past life, making her feel she was not one of them. Even Arthur Lestrange had more than once looked awkward at a

remark she happened to make! So, instead of confiding in any of them, that is, letting her heart go in search of theirs, she had taken to amusing them, and in this succeeded so thoroughly as to be an immense favorite—which, however, did not make her happy, did not light up the world within her. Hence it was no great wonder that, being such as she was, she should feel drawn to Richard. He was the first man she had even begun to respect. In her humility she found him every way her superior. It was wonderful to her that he should know so much about books, the way people made them, what they meant, and how mistakes got into them, and went from one generation to another: they were his very friends! She thought it was his love for books that had made him a bookbinder, as indeed it was his love for them that had made him a book-mender. Her heart and mind were free from many social prejudices. She knew that people looked down upon men who did things with their hands; but she had done so many things herself with her hands, and been so much obliged to others who could do things with their hands better than she, that she felt the superiority of such whose hands were their own perfect servants, and ready to help others as well.

One of the things by which she wounded the sense of propriety in those about her was, that she would talk of some things that, in their judgment, ought to be kept secret. Now Barbara could understand keeping a great joy secret, but a misery was not a nice thing to cuddle up and hide; of a misery she must get rid, and if talking about it was any relief, why not talk? She soon found, however, that it was no relief to talk to Arthur or his sister; and from the

common-place governess, she recoiled. The book-binder was different; he was a man; he was not what people called a gentleman; he was a man like the men in the Bible, who spoke out what they meant! The others were empty; Richard was full of man! As regarded her father and mother, she could betray no secret of theirs; everybody about them knew the things she talked of; and had they been secrets, neither would have cared a pin what a working man might know or think of them! Did they not quarrel in the presence of the very cat! Then Richard was such a gentlemanly workman! Of course he could not be a gentleman in England, but there must be, certainly there ought to be somewhere the place in which Richard, just as he was, would be a gentleman! She was sure he would not laugh at her behind her back, and she was not sure that Arthur, or Theodora, even, would not. More than all, he was ready to open for her the door into the rich chamber of his own knowledge! Must a man be a workman to know about books? What then if a workman was a better and greater kind of man than a gentleman? In her own country, it did not matter so much about books, for there one had so many friends! Why read about the beauties of Nature, where she was at home with her always! What did any one want with poetry who could be out as long as she pleased with the old night, and the stars gray with glory, and the wind wandering everywhere and knowing all things! Here it was different! Here she could not do without books! Where the things themselves were not, she wanted help to think about them! And that help was in books, and Richard could teach her how to get at it!

It was indeed amazing that one who had read so little should have so good, although so imperfect a notion of what books could do. Just so much a few cheap novels had sufficed to reveal to her! But then Barbara was herself a world of uncrystallized poetry. What is feeling but poetry in a gaseous condition? What is fine thought but poetry in a fluid condition? What is thought solidified, but fine prose; thought crystallized, but verse?

"Here," she would say, but later than the period of which I am now writing, "where the weather is often so stupid that it won't do anything, won't be weather at all; will neither blow, nor rain, nor freeze, nor shine, you need books to make a world inside you—to take you away, as by the spell of a magician or on the wings of an eagle, from the walls and the nothingness, into a world where one either finds everything or wants nothing." She had yet to learn that books themselves are but weak ministers, that the spirit dwelling in them must lead back to him who gave it or die; that they are but windows, which if they look not out on the eternal spaces, will themselves be blotted out by the darkness.

To end her story, she told Richard that, since their coming to this country, her mother's favorite had died. She nearly went mad, she said, and had never been like herself again. For not only had her opposition to her husband deepened into hate, but—here, to Richard's amusement when he found on what the reverential change was attendant, Barbara lowered her voice—she really and actually hated God also. "Isn't it awful?" Barbara said; but meeting no response in the honest eyes of Richard, she dropped hers, and went on.

"I have heard her say the wildest and wickedest things, careless whether any one was near. I think she must at times be out of her mind! One day not long ago I saw her shake her fist as high as she could reach above her head, looking up with an expression of rage and reproach and defiance that was terrible. Had we been in New Zealand, I should not have wondered so much: there are devils going about there. Nobody knows of any here, but it was here they got into my mother, and made her defy God. She does it straight out in church. That is why I always sit in the poor seats, and not in the little gallery that belongs to my father.—Have you ever been to our church, Mr. Tuke?"

Richard told her he never went to church except when his mother wanted him to go with her.

"My mother goes twice every Sunday; but what do you think she is doing all the time? The gallery has curtains about it, but she never allows those in front to be drawn, and anybody in the opposite gallery can see into it quite well, and the clergyman when he is in the pulpit: she lies there on a couch, in a nest of pillows, reading a novel, a yellow French one generally, just as if she were in her own room! She knows the clergyman sees her, and that is why she does it."

"She disapproves of the whole thing?" said Richard.

"She used to like church well enough."

"She must mean to protest, else why should she go? Has she had any quarrel with the clergyman?"

"None that I know of."

"What then do you think she means by going and

not joining in? Why is she present and not taking part?"

"I believe she does it just to let God know she is not pleased with him. She thinks he has treated her cruelly and tyrannically, and she will not pretend to worship him. She wants to show him how bitterly she feels the way he has turned against her. She used to say prayers to him; she will do so no more! and she goes to church that he may see she won't."

The absurdity of the thing struck Richard sharply, but he feared to hurt the girl and lose her confidence.

"Her behavior is only a kind of insolent prayer!" he said. "—Has the clergyman ever spoken to her about it?"

"I don't think he has. He spoke to me, but when I said he ought to speak to her, he did not seem to see it. *I* should speak to her fast enough if it were *my* church!"

"I dare say he thinks her mind affected, and fears to make her worse," said Richard. "But he might, I think, persuade her that, as she is not on good terms with the person who lives in the church, she ought to stay away."

Barbara looked at him with doubtful inquiry, but Richard went on.

"What sort of a man is the clergyman?" he asked.

"I don't know. He seems always thinking about things, and never finding out. I suppose he is stupid!"

"That does not necessarily follow," said Richard with a smile, reflecting how hard it would be for the man to answer one of a thousand questions he might put to him in connection with his trade. "Your poor mother must be very unhappy!" he added.

"She may well be! I am no comfort to her. She never heeds me; or she tells me to go and amuse myself—she is busy. My father has his twin, and poor mamma has nobody!"

CHAPTER XVII.

BARBARA AND OTHERS.

At this point, Barbara's friend came into the room, and they went away together.

Theodora, so named by her mother because she was born on a Sunday, was a very different girl from Barbara. Nominally friends, neither understood the other. Theodora was the best of the family, but that did not suffice to make her interesting. She was short, stout, rather clumsy, with an honest, thick-featured face, and entirely without guile. Even when she saw it, she could not believe it there. She had not much sympathy, but was very kind. She never hesitated to do what she was sure was right; but then except for rules, many of them far from right themselves, she would have been almost always in doubt. Anything in the shape of a rule, she received as an angel from heaven. If all the rules she obeyed had been right, and she had seen the right in them, she would have been making rapid progress; as it was, her progress was very slow. How Barbara and she managed to entertain each other, I find it hard to think; but all forms of innocent humanity must have much in common. A contrast, nevertheless, the two must have presented to any power able to read them. Barbara was like a heath of thyme and wild roses and sudden winds; Theodora like a Dutch garden without its flowers. They never quar-

relled. I suspect they did not come near enough to quarrel.

Barbara left Richard almost bewitched, and considerably perplexed. He had never seen anything like her. No more had most people that met her. She seemed of another nature from his, a sort of sylph or salamander, yet, in simplest human fashion, she had come quite close to him. She had indeed brought to bear upon him, without knowing it, that humbling and elevating power which ideal womankind has always had, and will eternally have upon genuine manhood. There was an airiness about her, yet a reality, a lightness, yet a force, a readiness, a life, such as he could never have imagined. She was a revelation unrevealed—a presence lovely but incredible, suggesting facts and relations which the commonplace in him said could not exist. The vision was, to use a favorite but pagan phrase, "too good to be true." Richard's knowledge of girls was small indeed, but he had now enough to make his first comparison: Alice was like China, Barbara like Venetian glass. He thought there was something in Alice if he could only get at it: he feared there was nothing in Barbara to get at. For one thing, how could she have such parents and take it so lightly!

There were certainly few things yet in flower in Barbara's garden, but there was a multitude of precious things on the way to unfold themselves to any one that might love her enough to give them a true welcome. She was nearly as far out of Richard's understanding as beyond that of the good Theodora. The consequence was that he felt himself full beside her emptiness. He was no coxcomb, neither dreamed of presenting himself for her admiration; but he

pictured the delight of opening the eyes of this child-woman to the many doors of treasure-houses that stood in her own wall.

Only those who haunt the slopes of literature know that marvels lie in the grass for the hand that will gather them in. Multitudes who count themselves readers know no more of the books they read than the crowds that visit the Academy exhibitions know of the pictures they gaze upon. Yet are the realms of literature free as air, freer even than those of music. The man whose literary judgment and sympathy I prized beyond that of the world beside, was a clerk in the Bank of England. The man who by the spell of his words can set me in the heart of soft-stealing twilight—nay, rather, can set the very heart of the dying day in me—was a Lancashire weaver. A dainty, bird-moth-like Barbara had begun to suspect the existence of something hers yet beyond her in books, of an unknown world which lay at her very door. In that same world the bookbinder passed much of his time, and it was neither in pride nor in presumption that he desired to share it with Barbara. It is the home-born impulse of every true heart to give of its best, to infect with its own joy; and the thought of giving grandly to a woman, to a lady, might well fill the soul of a working man with a hitherto unnamed ecstasy. Another might have compared it to the housing of a strayed angel with frozen feathers, lost on the wintry wilds of this far-out, border world; but Richard did not believe in those celestial birds; and had he believed, a woman would yet have been to him, and rightly, more than any angel. What he did think of was the huntsman and the little lady in The Flight of the Duchess.

He began to ponder how to treat her—how to begin to open doors for her—what door to open first. Should it be of prose or of verse? He must have more talk with her ere he could tell! He must try her with something!

He had time to ponder, for she did not anew swim into his ken for three days. He wondered whether he had displeased her, but could think of nothing he had said or done amiss. He must be very careful not to offend her with the least roughness in word or manner, lest he should so lose the chance of helping her! It was the main part of his creed, as gathered from his adoptive father, that a man must do something for his neighbor: Miss Wylder was his neighbor; what better thing could he do for her than make her free of the greatest joy he knew?

Barbara had quite as much liberty as was good. Her mother sat in a darkened room, and took morphia; her father, to occupy his leisure, had begun to repair an old house on the estate with his own hands. Nobody heeded Barbara; she did as she pleased, going and coming as in the colony. A favorite with all about the place, she had never to use authority. Every one, for very love, was at her service. Whatever preposterous thing, at whatever unearthly moment, she might have wanted, it would have been ready—her mare at midnight, her breakfast at noon, a cow in the library to draw from. There was little regularity in the house; every one wanted to do what was right in his own eyes; but every one was ready to see right with the eyes of Barbara.

Home was nevertheless, as one may well believe, a terribly dull place to her; and as, for some occult reason, Theodora Lestrange had taken a fancy to her, as Sir Wilton was charmed with her, and Lady

Ann—for reasons—had little to say against her, she was at Mortgrange as much as she pleased—never too much even for Arthur, whose propriety, rather insular, a little provincial, and sometimes pedantic, she would shock twenty times a day; for he was fascinated by her grace and playfulness, though he declared he would as soon think of marrying a humming-bird as Barbara. He tried for a while to throw his net over her, for he would fain have tamed her to come at his call; but he soon arrived at the conclusion that nothing but the troubles of life would tame her, and then it would be a pity. She was a fine creature, he said, but hardly human; and for his part he preferred a woman to a fay!

But such was the report of her riches, that Sir Wilton and Lady Ann were both ready to welcome her as a daughter-in-law. Sir Wilton was delighted with her gayety and the sharp readiness of her clever retort. All he regretted in her lack of an English education was that her speech was not quite that of a lady—on which point Sir Wilton had not always been so fastidious. For the rest, intellectual development was of so little interest to him that he never suspected Barbara of having more than a usual share of intellect to develop. She was just the wife for the future baronet, he was once heard to say—though how he came once to say it I cannot think, for never before had he betrayed a consciousness that he would not be the present baronet forever and ever. So long as he did not feel the approach of death, he would never think of dying, and then he would do his best to forget it. He seemed sometimes to grudge his son the dainty little wife Barbara would make him: "The rascal will be the envy of the clubs!" he said.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. WYLDER.

MR. WYLDER was lord of the manor, and chief land-owner, though his family had never been the most influential, in the parish next that in which lay Mort-grange. He was not much fitted for an English squire. He wished to stand well with his neighbors, but lacked the geniality which is the very body, the outside expression of humanity. Proud of his family, he had the peculiar fault of the Goth—that of arro-gance, with its accompanying incapacity for putting oneself in the place of another. Mr. Wylder pos-sessed a huge inability of conceiving the manner in which what he did or said must affect the person to whom he did or said it. So entirely was he thus disqualified for social interchange, that he remained supremely satisfied in his consequent isolation, hardly recognized it, and never doubted himself a perfect gentleman. Had any diffidence enabled him to per-ceive the reflection of himself in the mirroring minds of those around him, his self-opinion might have been troubled; but when he did begin to discover that the neighbors did not desire his company, he set it down to stupid prejudice against him because he had been so long absent from the country. He did not hunt, and when he went out shooting, which was seldom, he went alone, or with a gamekeeper only. In fact he was so careless, that most men who had once

shot with him, ever after gave him a wide berth when they saw him with a gun in his hand. On one occasion he shot his wife's twin in the calf of the leg; which, however, made her think no worse of his shooting, for she could never be persuaded he had not done it intentionally.

For a short time before leaving Australasia, the family had spent money in one of its larger cities, and had been a good deal followed; but neither there nor in England did they find that wealth could do everything. A few other qualities, not by any means of the highest order, are required by nearly all social agglomerations, and with some of these Mrs. Wylder was as scantily equipped as her husband with others.

Resenting the indifference of his neighbors, and not caring to remove it, Mr. Wylder betook himself to the exercise of certain constructive faculties, not unfrequently developed in circumstances in which a man has to be his own Jack-of-all-trades: finding a certain old manor-house which he had haunted as a boy, chiefly for the sake of its attendant gooseberries and apples, unoccupied and fallen into decay, he set about restoring it with his own hands. But it had not occurred to him that, although even in England it is not necessary, as they did at Lagado, in building to begin with the roof, in England especially is it necessary in repairing to begin with the roof. While the floors were rotting away, he would be busy panelling the walls, regardless of a drop falling steadily in the middle of the bench at which he was working.

The clergyman of the parish, one Thomas Wingfold, a man who loved his fellow, and would fain give him of the best he had, a man who was a Christian first, which means a man, and then a church-

man, had now, for almost three years, often puzzled brain and heart together to find what could be done for these his new parishioners—from the world's point of view the first, yet in reality as insignificant as any he had; and not yet did he know how to get near them. He had not yet seen a glimmer of religion in the man, and had seen more than a glimmer of something else in the woman. Between him and either of them their common humanity had not yet shown a spark. What he had seen of the girl he liked, but he had not seen much.

It was a fine frosty day in February, about twelve o'clock, when Mr. Wingfold walked up the avenue of Scotch firs to call on Mrs. Wylder. He was dressed like any country gentleman in a tweed suit, carried a rather strong stick, and wore a soft felt hat, looking altogether more of a squire than a clergyman—for which his parishioners mostly liked him the better. Pious people in general seem to regard religion as a necessary accompaniment of life; to Wingfold it was life itself; with him religion must be all, or could be nothing. He did not accept the good news of God; he strained it to his heart, and was jubilant over it. He was a rather square-looking man, with projecting brows, and a grizzled beard. The upper part of his face would look dark while a smile was hovering about his mouth; at another time his mouth would look solemn, almost severe, while a radiance, as from some white cloud nobody could see, illuminated his forehead. He generally walked with his eyes on the ground, but would every now and then straighten his back, and gaze away to the horizon, as if looking for the far-off sails of help. He was noted among his farmers for his common sense, as they called it, and

among the gentry for a certain frankness of speech, which most of them liked.

He rang the door-bell of the Hall, and asked if Mrs. Wylder was at home. The man hesitated, looked in the clergyman's face, and smiling oddly, answered, "Yes, sir."

"Only you don't think she will care to see me?"

"Well, you know, sir,——"

"I do. Go up, and announce me."

The man led the way, and Mr. Wingfold followed. He opened the door of a room on the first floor, and announced him. Mr. Wingfold entered immediately, that there might be no time for words with the man and a message of refusal.

Discouragement encountered him on the threshold. The lady sat by a blazing fire, with her back to a window through which the frosty sun of February was sending lovely prophecies of the summer. She was in a gorgeous dressing-gown, her plentiful black hair twisted carelessly, but with a show of defiance, round her head. She was almost a young woman still, with a hardness of expression that belonged neither to youth nor age. She sat sideways to the door, so that without turning her head she must have seen the parson enter, but she did not move a visible hair's-breadth. Her feet, in silk stockings and shabby slippers, continued perched on the fender. She made no sign of greeting when the parson came in front of her, but a scowl dark as night settled on her low forehead and black eyebrows, and her face shortened and spread out. Wingfold approached her with the air of a man who knew himself unwelcome but did not much mind—for he had not to care about himself.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Wylder!" he said. "What a lovely morning it is!"

"Is it? I know nothing about it. You have a brutal climate!"

He knew she regarded him as the objectionable agent of a more objectionable Heaven.

"You would not dislike it so much if you met it out of doors. A walk on a day like this now,——"

"Pray who authorized you to come and offer me advice? Have I concealed from you, Mr. Wingfold, that your presence gives me no pleasure?"

"You certainly have not! You have been quite honest with me. I did not come in the hope of pleasing you—though I wish I could."

"Then perhaps you will explain why you are here!"

"There are visits that must be made, even with the certainty of giving annoyance!" answered Wingfold, rather cheerfully.

"That means you consider yourself justified in forcing your way into my room, before I am dressed, with the simple intention of making yourself disagreeable!"

"If I were here on my own business, you might well blame me! But what would you say to one of your men who told you he dared not go your message for fear of the lightning?"

"I would tell him he was a coward, and to go about his business."

"That, then, is what I don't want to be told!"

"And for fear of being told it, you dare me?"

"Well—you may put it so;—yes."

"I don't like you the worse for your courage.

There's more than one man would face half a dozen bush-rangers rather than a woman I know!"

"I believe it. But it makes no extravagant demand on my courage. I am not afraid of *you*. I owe you nothing—except any service worth doing for you!"

"Let that blind down: the sun's putting the fire out."

"It's a pity to put the sun out in such a brutal climate. He does the fire no harm."

"Don't tell *me!*"

"Science says he does not."

"He puts the fire out, I tell you!"

"I do not think so."

"I've seen it with my own eyes. God knows which is the greater humbug—Science or Religion! —Are you going to pull that blind down?"

Wingfold lowered the blind.

"Now, look here!" said Mrs. Wylder. "You're not afraid of me, and I'm not afraid of you!—It's a low trade, is yours."

"What is my trade?"

"What is your trade?—Why, to talk goody! and read goody! and pray goody! and be goody, goody! —Ugh!"

"I'm not doing much of that sort at this moment, any way!" rejoined Wingfold, with a laugh.

"You know this is not the place for it!"

"Would you mind telling me which is the place to read a French novel in?"

"Church: there!"

"What would you do if I were to insist on reading a chapter of the Bible here?"

"Look!" she answered, and rising, snatched a

saloon-pistol from the chimney-piece, and took deliberate aim at him.

Wingfold looked straight down the throat of the thick barrel, and did not budge.

"—I would shoot you with that," she went on, holding the weapon as I have said. "It would kill you, for I can shoot, and should hit you in the eye, not on the head. I shouldn't mind being hanged for it. Nothing matters now!"

She flung the heavy weapon from her, gave a great cry, not like an hysterical woman, but an enraged animal, stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth, pulled it out again, and began tearing at it with her teeth. The pistol fell in the middle of the room. Wingfold went and picked it up.

"I should deserve it if I did," he said, quietly, as he laid the pistol on the table. "—But you don't fight fair, Mrs. Wylder; for you know I can't take a pistol with me into the pulpit and shoot you. It is cowardly of you to take advantage of that."

"Well! I like the assurance of you! Do I read so as to annoy any one?"

"Yes, you do. You daren't read aloud, because you would be put out of the church if you did; but you annoy as many of the congregation as can see you, and you annoy me. Why should you behave in that house as if it were your own, and yet shoot me if I behaved so in yours? Is it fair? Is it polite? Is it acting like a lady?"

"It *is* my house—at least it is my pew, and I will do in it what I please.—Look here, Mr. Wingfold: I don't want to lose my temper with you, but I tell you that pew is mine, as much as the chair you're not ashamed to sit upon at this moment! And let

me tell you, after the way *I've* been treated, my behavior don't splash much. When he's brought a woman to my pass, I don't see God Almighty can complain of her manners!"

"Well, thinking of him as you do, I don't wonder you are rude!"

"What! You won't curry favor with him?—You hold by fair play? Come, now! I call that downright pluck!"

"I fear you mistake me a little."

"Of course I do! I might have known that! When you think a parson begins to speak like a man, you may be sure you mistake him!"

"You wouldn't behave to a friend of your own according to what another person thought of him, would you?"

"No, by Jove, I wouldn't!"

"Then you won't expect me to do so!"

"I should think not! Of course you stick by the church!"

"Never mind the church. She's not my mistress, though I am her servant. God is my master, and I tell you he is as good and fair as goodness and fairness can be goodness and fairness!"

"What! Will you drive me mad! I wish he would serve you as he's done me—then we should hear another tune—rather! You call it good—you call it fair, to take from a poor creature he made himself, the one only thing she cared for?"

"Which was the cause of a strife that made of a family in which he wanted to live, a very hell upon earth!"

"You dare!" she cried, starting to her feet.

Wingfold did not move.

"Mrs. Wylder," he said, "*dare* is a word that needn't be used again between you and me. If you dare tell God that he is a devil, I may well dare tell you that you know nothing about him, and that I do!"

"Say on your honor, then, if he had treated you as he has done me—taken from you the light of your eyes, would you count it fair? Speak like the man you are."

"*I know I should.*"

"I don't believe you. And I won't worship him."

"Why, who wants you to worship him? You must be a very different person before he will care much for your worship! You *can't* worship him while you think him what you do. He is something quite different. You don't know him to love, and you don't know him to worship."

"Why, bless my soul! ain't it your business—ain't you always making people say their prayers?"

"It is my business to help my brothers and sisters to know God, and worship him in spirit and in truth—because he is altogether and perfectly true and loving and fair. Do you think he would have you worship a being such as you take him to be. If your son is in good company in the other world, he must be greatly troubled at the way you treat God—at your unfairness to him. But your bad example may, for anything I know, have sent him where he has not yet begun to learn anything!"

"God have mercy!—will the man tell me to my face that my boy is in hell?"

"What would you have? Would you have him with the being you think so unjust that you hate him all the week, and openly insult him on Sunday?"

"You are a bad man, a hard-hearted brute, a devil, to say such things about my blessed boy! Oh my God! to think that the very day he was taken ill, I struck him! Why did he let me do it? To think that that very day he killed him, when he ought to have killed me!—killed him that I might never be able to tell him I was sorry!"

"If he had not taken him then, would you ever have been sorry you struck him?"

She burst into outcry and weeping, mingled with such imprecation, that Wingfold thought it one of those cases of possession in which nothing but prayer is of use. But the soul and the demon were so united, so entirely of one mind, that there was no room for prayer to get between them. He sat quiet, lifted up his heart, and waited. By and by there came a lull, and the redeemable woman appeared, emerging from the smoke of the fury.

"Oh, my Harry! my Harry!" she cried. "To take him from my very bosom! He will never love me again! God *shall* know what I think of it! No mother could but hate him if he served her so!"

"Apparently you don't want the boy back in your bosom again!"

"None of your fooling of me now!" she answered, drawing herself up, and drying her eyes. "I can stand a good deal, but I won't stand that! What's gone is gone! He's dead, and the dead lie in no bosom but that of the grave! They go, and return never more!"

"But you will die too!"

"What do you mean by that? You *will* be talking! As if I didn't know I'd got to die, one day or another! What's that to me and Harry!"

"Then you think we're all going to cease and go out, like the clouds that are carried away and broken up by the wind?"

"I know nothing about it, and I don't care. Nothing's anything to me but Harry, and I shall never see my Harry again!—Heaven! Bah! What's heaven without Harry!"

"Nothing, of course! But don't you ever think of seeing him again?"

"What's the use! It's all a mockery! Where's the good of meeting when we sha'n't be human beings any more? If we're nothing but ghosts—if he's never to know me—if I'm never to feel him in my arms—ugh! it's all humbug! If he ever meant to give me back my Harry, why did he take him from me? If he didn't mean me to rage at losing him, why did he give him to me?"

"He gave you his brother at the same time, and you refused to love him: what if he took the one away until you should have learned to love the other?"

"I can't love him; I won't love him! He has his father to love him! He don't want my love! I haven't got it to give him! Harry took it with him! I hate Peter!—What are you doing there—laughing in your sleeve? Did you never see a woman cry?"

"I've seen many a woman cry, but never without my heart crying with her. You come to my church, and behave so badly I can scarce keep from crying for you. It half choked me last Sunday, to see you lying there with that horrid book in your hand, and the words of Christ in your ears!"

"I didn't heed them. It wasn't a horrid book!"

"It *was* a horrid book. You left it behind you,

and I took it with me. I laid it on my study-table, and went out again. When I came home to dinner, my wife brought it to me, and said, 'Oh, Tom, how can you read such books?' 'My dear,' I answered, 'I don't know what is in the book; I haven't read a word of it.'"

"And then you told her where you found it?"

"I did not."

"What did you do with it?"

"I said to her, 'If it's a bad book, here goes!' and threw it in the fire."

"Then I'm not to know the end of the story! But I can send to London for another copy! I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Wingfold, for destroying my property!—But you didn't tell her where you found it?"

"I did not. She never asked me."

Mrs. Wylder was silent. She seemed a little ashamed, perhaps a little softened. Wingfold bade her good-morning. She did not answer him.

CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. WYLDER AND BARBARA.

To make all this quite credible to a doubting reader, it would be necessary to tell Mrs. Wylder's history from girlhood. She had had a very defective education, and what there was of it was all for show. Then she was married far too young, and to a man unworthy of any good woman. She indeed was not a good woman, but she was capable of being made worse; and in the bush, where she passed years not a few, and in cities afterward, she met women and men more lawless yet than herself or her husband. Overbearing where her likings were concerned, and full of a certain generosity where but her interests were in question, the slackness of the social bonds in the colonies had favored her abnormal development. It is difficult to say how much man or woman is the worse for doing, when freed from restraint, what he or she would have been glad to do before, but for the restraint. Many who go to the colonies, and there to the dogs, only show themselves such as they dared not appear at home: they step on a steeper slope, and arrive, not at the pit, for they were in that already, but at the bottom of it, so much the faster. There were, however, in Mrs. Wylder, lovely rudimentary remnants of a good breed. She inherited feelings which gave her a certain intermittent and fugitive dignity, of some service to others in her

wilder times, and to herself when she came into contact with an older civilization. She would occasionally do a right generous thing—not seldom give with a freedom and judge with a liberality which were mainly rooted in carelessness.

She had much confidence in her daughter; and it is said well for the mother that, with all her experience, she yet had this confidence—and none the less that she had never taken pains to instruct her in what was becoming. The most she had done in this way was once to snatch from her hand and throw in the fire a novel she had herself, a moment before, finished with unquestioning acceptance. If she had found her behaving like some of her acquaintance to whose conduct she did not give a second thought, for her friends might do as they pleased so long as they did not offend *her*, she would certainly, in some of her moods at least, have killed her.

While compelled, from lack of service, to employ herself in house affairs, she neither ate nor drank more than seemed good for her; but as soon as she had but to live and be served, she began to counterbalance *ennui* with self-indulgence, and continued to do so until the death of her boy, ever after which she had sought refuge from grief in narcotics. Possibly she would not have behaved as she did in church, but that her nervous being was a very sponge for morphia. Born to be a strong woman, she was a slave to her impulses, and, one of the weakest of her kind, went into a rage at the least show of opposition.

Scarcely had Mr. Wingfold left the room, when in came Barbara in her riding-habit, with the glow of joyous motion upon her face, for she had just ridden from Mortgrange.

"How do you do, mamma?" she said, but did not come within a couple of yards of her. "I've had such a ride—as straight as any crow could fly, between the two stations! I never could hit the line before. But I got a country-fellow to point me out a landmark or two, and here I am in just half the time I should have taken by the road! Such jumps!"

"You're a madcap!" said her mother. "You'll be brought home on a shutter some day! Mark my words, Bab! You'll see!—or at least I shall; you'll be past seeing! But it don't matter; it's what we're made for! Die or be killed, it's all one! I don't care!"

"I do though, mamma! I don't want to be killed just yet—and I don't mean to be! But I must have a second horse! I begin to suspect Miss Brown of treating me like a child, She takes care of me! I mean to let her see what *I* can do if *she's* up to it!"

"You'll do nothing of the kind! I'll have her shot if you go after any of your old pranks! And, while I think of it, Bab—your father has set his heart on your marrying Mr. Lestrange: I can see it perfectly, and I won't have it! If I hear of anything of that sort between you, I'll set a heavy foot on it.—How long have you been there this time?"

"A week.—But why shouldn't I marry Mr. Lestrange if I like?"

"Because your father has set his heart on it, I tell you! Isn't that enough, you tiresome little wretch? I *will not* have it—not if you break your heart over it!—There!"

Barbara burst out in a laugh that rang like a bronze bell.

"Break my heart for Mr. Lestrange! There's not a man in the world I would break my little finger for! But my heart! that is too funny! You needn't be uneasy, mamma; I don't like Arthur Lestrange one bit, and I wouldn't marry him if you and papa too wanted me. Oh, such a proper young man! He doesn't think me fit company for his sister!"

"He said so! and you didn't give him a cut over the eyes with your whip? My God!"

"Gracious, no! He never says anything half so amusing! He's scorchingly polite! I would sooner fall in love with the bookbinder!"

"The bookbinder? Who's that? You mean the tutor, I suppose! I'm not up to the slang of this old brute of a country!"

"No, mamma; there is a man binding—or mending rather, the books in the library. He's going to teach me to shoe Miss Brown! Papa wouldn't like me to marry a blacksmith—I mean a bookbinder—would he?"

"Certainly not."

"Then you would, mamma?" said Bab, demurely, with two catherine-wheels of fun in her downcast eyes.

"If you go to do anything mad now, I'll——"

"Don't strain your innocent invention, mammy! I think I'll take Mr. Lestrange! Better anger one than both of you!"

"Tease me any more with your nonsense, and I'll set your father on you! Be off with you!"

CHAPTER XX.

BARBARA AND HER CRITICS.

WHILE the two talked in the same pulverous fashion, the words came very differently from the two mouths. In the speech of the mother was more than a tone of the vulgarity of a conscious right to lay down the law, of the rudeness born of feeling above obedience and incapable of error—a rudeness identical with that of the typical vulgar duchess; the daughter's tone was playful, but dainty in its playfulness, and not without a certain unconscious dignity; her lawlessness was the freedom of the bird that cannot trespass, not that of the quadruped forcing its way. Her almost baby-like cheeks, her musical voice clear of any strain of sorrow, her quick relations with the whole world of things, her grace, more child-like than womanly, whether she stood or sat or moved about, all indicated a simple, fearless, true and trusting nature. Everybody at Mortgrange liked her; nearly everybody at Mortgrange had some different fault to find with her; all agreed that she wanted taming—except Sir Wilton, who allowed the wildness, but would not hear of the taming. The hour of the morning or the night at which she would not go wandering alone about the park, or even outside it, had not yet been discovered.

"Why don't you look better after your friend Theo?" said her father one day when Barbara's chair was empty at dinner—with his cold incisive voice, a

little rasping now that the clutch of age's hand was beginning to close on his throat.

"She doesn't mind me, papa," Theodora answered. "Do say something to her, mamma!"

"'Tis not my business to reform other people's children," Lady Ann returned.

"I find her exceedingly original!" remarked the baronet.

"In her manners, certainly," responded his lady.

"I find them perfect. Their very audacity renders them faultless. And the charm is that she does not even suspect herself audacious."

"That is her charm, I confess," responded Arthur; "but it is a dangerous one, and may one day cause her to be sadly misunderstood."

"A London drawing-room is your high court of parliament, Arthur!" said his father.

"Miss Wylder, with all her sweetness," remarked Miss Malliver, "has not an idea of social distinction. She cannot understand why she should not talk to any farmer's man or dairymaid she happens to meet! It is not her talking to them I mind so much as the familiar way she does it. If they take liberties, it will be her own fault. Any groom might be pardoned for fancying she thought him as good as herself!"

"But she does," answered Theodora. "Yesterday, I found her talking to the bookbinder as familiarly as if he had been Arthur!"

This was hardly correct, for Barbara talked to the bookbinder with a deference she never showed Lestrange.

"She lacks self-respect!" said Lady Ann. "But we must deal with her gently, and try to do her good. I think myself there is not much amiss with her

beyond love of her own way. Her dislike of restraint certainly does not befit a communicant!"

Lady Ann was an unfaltering church-goer, rigidly decorous in rendering what she imagined God, and knew the clergyman expected, and as rank a mammon-worshipper as any in the land.

"But I so far agree with Sir Wilton," she went on, "as to grant that her manners have in them the germ of possible distinction; and I *think* they will come to be all, or nearly all, that could be desired. We ought at least to give her the advantage of any doubt, and do what we can to lead her in the right direction."

"It's a fine thing to go to church and have your wits sharpened!" said the baronet, with an ungenial laugh.

Sir Wilton regarded Lady Ann as the coldest-blooded and most selfish woman in creation, and certainly she was not less selfish and was colder-blooded than he. Full of his own importance as any Pharisee—as full as he could be without making himself ridiculous, he resented the slight regard she showed to that importance. He believed himself wise in human nature, when in truth he was only quick to read in another what lay within the limited range of his own consciousness. Of the noble in humanity he knew next to nothing. To him all men were only selfish. The cause, though by no means the logical ground of this his belief, was his own ingrained selfishness. With his hazy yet keen cold eye he was quick to see in another, and prompt to lay to his charge, the faults he pardoned in himself. He had some power over himself, for he very seldom went into a rage; but he kept his temper like a devil, and was coldly cruel. His wife had tamed him a good deal, without in the least reforming him.

He would have hated her quite, but for the sort of respect she roused in him by surpassing him in his own kind. He cringed to her with a sneer. It was long since he had learned from her society to remember, with the nearest approach to compunction of which his moth-eaten heart was capable, the woman who had forsaken her own rank to brave the perils of his, and had sunk frozen to death by the cold of his contact. For some years he felt far more friendly to the offspring of the high-born lady than to that of the blacksmith's daughter; but as time went on, and the memory of the more plebeian infant's ugliness faded, he began to think how jolly it would be—how it would serve out her ladyship and her brood of icicles, if after all the blacksmith's grandson turned up to oust the earl's. He grinned as he lay awake in the night, picturing to himself how the woman in the next room would take it. Him and his son together her ladyship might find almost too much for her! But for many years he had indulged in no allusion to the possible improbable, allowing her ladyship to refer to Arthur as the heir without hinting at the uncertainty of his position.

Lady Ann, from dwelling on what she counted the shame of his origin, had got so far toward persuading herself that the vanished child was base-born, that she scarcely doubted the possibility, were he to appear, of proving his claim false, and originated by conspiracy. Unable to learn from her husband when and where the baby was baptized, she concluded that he had never been baptized, and that there was no record of his birth. As the years went by, and nothing was heard of him, she grew more and more confident. Now and then a fear would

cross her, but she always succeeded in stifling it—without, however, arriving at such a degree of certainty, that the thought of the child had no share in her regard for the wealthy Barbara, her encouragement of her general relations with the family, and her connivance at her frequent and prolonged visits during the absence of herself and Sir Wilton.

She was now returned, and had found everything as she left it, with the insignificant difference that the bay window of the library was occupied by a man at work repairing the books. She had resumed the reins of the family-coach, and now went on to play the part of a good providence, and drive the said coach to the top of the hill.

Sir Wilton, I have said, liked Barbara. She amused him, and amusement was the nearest to sunshine his soul was capable of reaching. All his weather else was gray, with a touch of lurid on the western horizon—of which he was not weather-wise enough to take heed. He had been at school with Barbara's father, but did not like her any better for that. In youth they had not been friends, except in a way that brought their *interests* too much in collision for their friendship to last. It had ended in a quiet hate, each knowing too well how much the other knew to dare an open quarrel. But all that was many years away, and Tom Wylder had been long abroad and almost forgotten. Sir Wilton, notwithstanding, admired the forgivingness of his own disposition when he found himself wondering how Tom Wylder would regard an alliance with his old rival. Doubtless he would like his daughter to be *my lady*, but he might be looking for a loftier title than his son could give her!

Sir Wilton was incapable, however, of taking any active interest in the matter. The well-being of his family, when he himself should be out of the way, did not much affect him. Nothing but his lower nature had ever roused him to action of any kind. How far the idea of betterment had ever shown itself to him, God only knows. Apparently, he was a child of the evil one, whom nothing but the furnace could cleanse. Almost the only thing he could now imagine giving him vivid pleasure was to see his wife thoroughly annoyed.

All he had ever had of the manners of a gentleman, remained with him. He was courteous to ladies, never swore in their presence—except sometimes in a mutter at his wife, and could upon occasion show a kindness that cost him nothing. Humanity was not all dead out of him; neither was there a purely human thought in him. On Barbara he smiled his sweetest smile: it owed most of its sweetness to the dentist.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PARSON'S PARABLE.

MR. WINGFOLD went as he had come, thoughtful even to trouble. What was to be done for the woman? What was his part, as parson of the parish, with regard to her behavior in church? Was it or was it not his part to take public notice of what she intended, if not as a defiance to God, at least as an open expression of her bitter resentment of his dealing with her? The Creator's discipline did not suit his creature's taste, and she would let him know it: whether it suited her necessities, she did not ask or care; she knew nothing of her necessities—only of her desires. Had she had a suspicion that she was an eternal creature, poor as well as miserable, blind and naked as well as bereaved and angry, she might have allowed some room for God to show himself right. But she was ignorant of herself as any savage. Was Wingfold to take her insolence in church as a thing done to himself, which he must endure with patience? or, putting himself out of the question, and regarding her conduct only as a protest against the ways of God with her, must he leave reproof as well as vengeance to the Lord? Was it his business, or was it not, to rebuke her, and make his rebuke as open as her offence? It troubled him almost beyond bearing to think that some of his flock might imagine that the great lady of the parish was allowed to

behave herself unseemly, where another would be exposed to shame. But how abhorrent to him was a public contention in the church, and on the Lord's day! Mrs. Wylder was just the woman to challenge forcible expulsion, and make the circumstances of it as flagrant as possible! She might even use both pistol and whip! What better opportunity could she find for giving point to her appeal against God! A man might, in the rage of disappointment, cry out that there could be no God where baffle met the holiest instinct—that blundering chance must rule; he might, illogical with grief, declare that as God could treat him so, he would believe in him no longer; or he might assert that an evil being, not a good, was at the heart of life—a devil and not a God, for he was one who created and forgot, or who remembered and did not care—who quickened exposure but gave no shield! called from the void a being filled with doorless avenues to pain, and abandoned him to incarnate cruelty, that he might make him sport with the wildness of his dismay! but here was a woman who did not say that God was not, or that he was not good, but with passionate self-party-spirit cried out, "He is against me! he sides with my husband! He is not my friend, but his: I will let him know how I resent his unfairness!" Whether God was good or bad she did not care—that was not a point she was concerned in; all she heeded was how he behaved to her—whether he took part with her husband or herself. He had torn from her the desire of her heart and left her desolate: she would worship him no longer! She had been brought up to believe there was a God, and had never doubted his existence: with her whole will

and passion she opposed that which she called God. She had never learned to yield when wrong, and now she was sure she was right. Though hopeless she resisted. She cried out against God, but believed Him by his own act helpless to deliver her, for what could He do against the grave? Powerless for her as unfriendly toward her, why should she worship him? Why should she pay court to one who neither would nor could give her what she wanted? What was he God for? Was *she* to go to his house, and carry herself courteously, as if he were her friend! She would not! And that there might be no mistake as to how she regarded him, she would sit in her pew and read her novel, while the friends of God said their prayers to him! If she annoyed them, so much the better, for the surer she might hope that *he* was annoyed.

It may seem to some incredibly terrible that one should believe in God and defy him! But do none of us, who say also we believe in God, and who are far from defying him, ever behave like Mrs. Wylder? It is one thing to believe in a God; it is quite another to believe in God! Every time we grumble at our fate, every time we are displeased, hurt, resentful at this or that which comes to us, every time we do not receive the suffering sent us "with both hands," as William Law says, we are of the same spirit with this half-crazy woman. In some fashion, and that a real one, she must have believed in the God against whom she urged her complaint; and it is rather to her praise that, like Job, she did it openly, and not with mere base grumblings in her heart at her fireside. It is mean to believe half-way, to believe in words, and in action deny. One of four gates stands

open to us: to deny the existence of God, and say we can do without him; to acknowledge his existence, but say he is not good, and act as true men resisting a tyrant; to say, "I would there were a God," and be miserable because there is none; or to say there must be a God, and he must be perfect in goodness or he could not be, and give ourselves up to him heart and soul and hands and history.

But what was parson Wingfold to do in the matter? Was he to allow the simple sheep of his flock to think him afraid of the squire's lady? or was he to venture an uproar in the church on a Sunday morning? His wife and he had often talked the thing over, but had arrived at no conclusion. He went to her now, and told her all that had passed.

"Isn't it time to do something?" she said.

"Indeed I think so—but what?" he answered. "I wish you would show me what I ought to do! Let me see it, and I will do it."

She was silent for a moment.

"Couldn't you preach at her?" she said, with a laugh in which was an odd mingling of doubt and merriment.

"I have always thought that a mean thing, and have never done it—except by dwelling on broadest principles. That an evil principle has an advocate present, is no reason for sparing it: what am I there for? But to preach that the many may turn on the one—that I never could do!"

"This case is different from any other. The wrong is done continuously, in the very eyes of the congregation, and for the sake of its being seen," Mrs. Wingfold answered. "Neither would you be the assailant; you would but accept, not give the

challenge. For I don't know how many Sundays, she has been pitting her position in the pew against yours in the pulpit! Believing it out of your power to do anything, she flaunts her French novel in your face; and those that can't see her, see her yellow novel in your eyes, and think about her and you, instead of the things you are saying to them! For the sake of the work given you, for the sake of your influence with the people, you must do something!"

"It is God she defies, not me."

"I think she defies you to say an honest word on his behalf. Your silence must seem to her an acknowledgment that she is right."

"That cannot be, after what I have said to her more than once in her own house."

"Then at least she must think that either you have no authority to drive from the little temple one of the cows of Bashan, or are afraid of her horns."

"Quite right, Nelly!" cried the rector; "you are quite right. Only you don't give me a hint what to do!"

"Am I not saying as plain as I can that you must preach at her?"

"H'm! I didn't expect that of you!"

"No; for if you could have expected it of me, you would have thought of it yourself! But just think! A public scandal requires public treatment. You will not be dragging her before the people; she has put herself there! She is brazen, and must be treated as brazen—set in the full glare of opinion. And I think, if I were a clergyman, I should know how to do it!"

Wingfold was silent. She must be right! Some-

thing glimmered before him—something possible—he could not see plainly what.

"It is all very well to make such a clamor about her boy," continued his wife, "but every one knows that she quarrelled with him dreadfully—that for days at a time they would be cat and dog with each other. Her animal instinct lasted it out, and she did not come to hate him; but I can't help thinking it must have been in a great measure because her husband favored the other that she took up this one with such passion. I have been told she would abuse him in language not fit to repeat, the little wretch answering her back, and choking with rage that he could not tear her."

"Who told you?" asked the parson.

"I would rather not say."

"Are you sure it is not mere gossip?"

"Quite sure. To be gossip, a thing must go through two mouths at least, and I had it first-mouth. I tell it you because I think it worth your knowing."

The next Sunday morning, there lay the lady as usual, only her novel was a red one. When the parson went into the pulpit, he cast one glance on the gallery to his right, then spoke thus:—

"My friends, I will follow the example of our Lord, and speak to you to-day in a parable. The Lord said there are things better spoken in parables, because of the eyes that will not see, and the ears that will not hear.

"There was once a mother left alone with her little boy—the only creature in the world or out of it that she cared for. She was a good mother to him, as good a mother as you can think, never overbearing

or unkind. She never thought of herself, but always of the desire of her heart, the apple of her eye, her son born of her own body. It was not because of any return he could make her that she loved him. It was not to make him feel how good she was, that she did everything for him. It was not to give him reasons for loving *her*, but because she loved *him*, and because he needed her. He was a delicate child, requiring every care she could lavish upon him, and she did lavish it. Oh, how she loved him! She would sit with the child in her lap from morning till night, gazing on him; she always went to sleep with him in her bosom—as close to her as ever he could lie. When she woke in the dark night, her first movement was to strain him closer, her next to listen if he was breathing—for he might have died and been lost! When he looked up at her with eyes of satisfaction, she felt all her care repaid.

"The years went on, and the child grew, and the mother loved him more and more. But he did not love her as she loved him. He soon began to care for the things she gave him, but he did not learn to love the mother who gave them. Now the whole good of things is to be the messengers of love—to carry love from the one heart to the other heart; and when these messengers are fetched instead of sent, grasped at, that is, by a greedy, ungiving hand, they never reach the heart, but block up the path of love, and divide heart from heart; so that the greedy heart forgets the love of the giving heart more and more, and all by the things it gives. That is the way generosity fares with the ungenerous. The boy would be very pleasant to his mother so long as he thought to get something from her; but when he

had got what he wanted, he would forget her until he wanted something more.

"There came at last a day when she said to him, 'Dear boy, I want you to go and fetch me some medicine, for I feel very poorly, and am afraid I am going to be ill!' He mounted his pony, and rode away to get the medicine. Now his mother had told him to be very careful, because the medicine was dangerous, and he must not open the bottle that held it. But when he had it, he said to himself, 'I dare say it is something very nice, and mother does not want me to have any of it!' So he opened the bottle and tasted what was in it, and it burned him terribly. Then he was furious with his mother, and said she had told him not to open the bottle just to make him do it, and vowed he would not go back to her! He threw the bottle from him, and turned, and rode another way, until he found himself alone in a wild forest, where was nothing to eat, and nothing to shelter him from the cold night, and the wind blew through the trees, and made strange noises. He dismounted, afraid to ride in the dark, and before he knew, his pony was gone. Then he began to be miserably frightened, and to wish he had not run away. But still he blamed his mother, who might have known, he said, that he would open the bottle.

"The mother got very uneasy about her boy, and went out to look for him. The neighbors too, though he was not a nice boy, and none but his mother liked him, went out also, for they would gladly find him and take him home to her; and they came at last to the wood, with their torches and lanterns.

"The boy was lying under a tree, and saw the

lights, and heard the voices, and knew it was his mother come. Then the old wickedness rose up fresh in his heart, and he said to himself: 'She shall have trouble yet before she finds me! Am I to come and go as she pleases?' He lay very still; and when he saw them coming near, crept farther, and again lay still. Thus he went on doing, and so avoided his saviours. He heard one say there were wolves in the wood, for that was the sound of them; but he was just the kind of boy that will not believe, but thinks every one has a purpose of his own in saying this or that. So he slipped and slipped away until at length all despaired of finding him, and left the wood.

"Suddenly he knew that he was again alone. He gave a great shriek, but no one heard it. He stood quaking and listening. Presently his pony came rushing past him, with two or three wolves behind him. He started to his feet and began to run, wild to get out of the wood. But he could not find the way, and ran about this way and that until utter despair came down upon him, and all he could do was to lie still as a mouse lest the wolves should hear him.

"And as he lay he began at last to think that he was a wicked child; that his mother had done everything to make him good, and he would not be good; and now he was lost, and the wolves alone would find him! He sank at last into a stupor, and lay motionless, with death and the wolves after him.

"He came to himself in the arms of a strange woman, who had taken him up, and was carrying him home.

"The name of the woman was Sorrow—a wander-

ing woman; a kind of gypsy, always going about the world, and picking up lost things. Nobody likes her, hardly anybody is civil to her; but when she has set anybody down and is gone, there is often a look of affection and wonder and gratitude sent after her. For all that, however, very few are glad to be found by her again.

"Sorrow carried him weeping home to his mother. His mother came out, and took him in her arms. Sorrow made her courtesy, and went away. The boy clung to his mother's neck, and said he was sorry. In the midst of her joy his mother wept bitterly, for he had nearly broken her heart. She could not get the wolves out of her mind.

"But, alas! the boy forgot all, and was worse than ever. He grew more and more cruel to his mother, and mocked at every word she said to him; so that——"

There came a cry from the gallery. The congregation started in sudden terror to their feet. The rector stopped, and turning to the right, stood gazing. In the front of the squire's pew stood Mrs. Wylder, white, and speechless with rage. For a moment she stood shaking her fist at the preacher. Then, in a hoarse broken voice, came the words—

"It's a lie. My boy was never cruel to me. It's a wicked lie."

She could say no more, but stood and glared, hate in her fierce eyes, and torture in her colorless face.

"Madam, you have betrayed yourself," said the rector, solemnly. "If your son behaved well to you, it makes it the worse in you to behave ill to your Father. From Sunday to Sunday you insult him with rude behavior. I tell you so in the face of this

congregation, which knows it as well as I. Hitherto I have held my tongue—from no fear of the rich, from no desire to spare them deserved disgrace in the eyes of the poor, but because I shrank from making the house of God a place of contention. Madam, you have behaved shamefully, and I do my duty in rebuking you."

The whole congregation were on their feet, staring at her. A moment she stood, and would have brazened out the stare. But she felt the eyes of the motionless hundreds blazing upon her, and the culprit soul grew naked in the presence of judging souls. Her nerve gave way; she turned her back, left the pew, and fled from the church by the squire's door, into the grounds of Wylder Hall.

Happily Barbara was not in the church that morning.

The next Sunday the squire's pew was empty. The red volume lay open on its face upon the floor of it.

Wingfold's dear plot had palled. He had roughhewed his end, but the divinity had shaped it.

When the squire came to know what had taken place, he made his first call on the rector. He said nothing about his wife, but plainly wished it understood that he bore him no ill will for what he had

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

THE rector had often wished his wife could in some natural way get hold of Miss Wylder; he suspected something exceptionally fine in her: how else could she, with such a father and such a mother, have such a countenance? There must be a third factor in the affair, and one worth knowing—namely, herself! That she seemed to avoid being reckoned among church-goers might be a point in her favor! What reports reached him of her wild ways, mingled with exaggerated stories of her lawlessness, did not shock him: what was true in them might spring from mere exuberance of life, whose joy was her only law—and yet a real law to her!

He had had no opportunity of learning either how peculiar the girl was, or how capable. She was not yet up to his teaching; she had to have other water to drink first, and was now approaching a source that might have caused him anxiety for her, had he ever so little believed in chance. But a shepherd is none the less a true shepherd that he leaves plenty of liberty to the lamb to pick its own food. That its best instincts may not be to the taste either of its natural guardians or the public, is nothing against those instincts. Without appearing to their guardians both strange and headstrong, some sheep would never get near the food necessary to keep them alive.

Confined to the provender even their shepherds would have them contented withal, many would die. Sometimes, to escape from the arid wastes of "society," haunted with the cries of its spiritual greengrocers, and find the pasture on which their souls can live, they have to die, and climb the grassy slopes of the heavenly hills.

Barbara had as yet had no experience of pain—or of more at least than came from sympathy with suffering—a sympathy which though ready, could hardly be deep in one who had never had a headache herself. To all dumb suffering things she was very gentle and pitiful; but her pity was like that of a child over her doll.

She was always glad to get away from home. While her father was paying his long-delayed visit to the rector, she was flying over hedge and ditch and rail, in a line for that gate of Mortgrange which Simon Armour and his grandson found open when first the former took the latter to see the place; Barbara had a key to it.

She went with swift, gliding step, like that of a red Indian, into the library. Richard was piecing the broken cords of a great old folio—the more easily that they were double—in order to re-attach the loosened sheets and the hanging board, and so get the book ready for a new cover. She carried in her hand something yet more sorely in need of mending—a pigeon with a broken wing, which she had seen lying in the park, and had dismounted to take. It kept opening and shutting its eyes, and she knew that nothing could be done for it; but the mute appeal of the dying thing had gone to her heart, and she wanted sympathy, whether for it or for herself she

could hardly have distinguished. How she came to wake a little more just then, I cannot tell, but the fact is a joint in her history. The jar to the pigeon's life affected her as a catastrophe. She felt that there a crisis had come: a living conscious thing could do nothing for its own life, and lay helpless. Say rather —seemed so to lie. Oh, surely it is in reason that not a sparrow should fall to the ground without the Father! To whom but the father of the children that bemoan its fate, should the children carry his sparrow? But Barbara was carrying her pigeon where was no help for the heart of either.

"Ah, poor thing," said Richard, "I fear we can do nothing for it! But it will be at rest soon! It is fast going."

"Ah! but where?" said Barbara, to whom that moment came the question for the first time.

"Nowhere," answered Richard.

"How can that be? If I were going, I should be going somewhere! I couldn't go nowhere if I tried ever so. I don't like you to say it is going nowhere! Poor little thing! I won't let you go nowhere!"

"Well!" returned Richard, a little bewildered, "what would you have me say? You know what I mean! It is going not to be, that is all."

"That is all! How would *you* like to be told you were going nowhere—going not to be—that was all?"

Richard saw that to declare abruptly his belief that he was himself as much going nowhere as any pigeon that ever died, would probably be to close the door between them. At the same time, if he left her to imagine that he expected life for himself, but not for the animals, she must think him selfish! Unwilling

therefore to answer, he took refuge in his genuine sympathy with suffering.

"Is it not strange," he said, and would have taken from her hands the wounded bird, but she would not part with it, "that men should take pleasure in killing—especially a creature like that, so full of innocent content? It seems to me the greatest pity to stop such a life!"

As he spoke there came upon him the dim sense of a foaming reef or argument ahead—such as this: "Then there ought to be no death! And what ought not to be, cannot be! But there is death: what then is death? If it be a stopping of life, then that is which cannot be. But it may be only a change in the form of life that looks like a stopping, and is not! If Death be stronger than Life, so that he stops life, how then was Life able so to flout him, that he, the thing that was not, arose from the antenatal sepulchre on which Death sat throned in impotent negation of entity, unable to preclude existence, and yet able to annihilate it? Life alone is; nothingness is not; Death cannot destroy; he is not the antagonist, not the opposite of life." Some such argument Richard, I say, saw vaguely through the gloom ahead, and began to beat to windward.

"Did you ever notice," he said, "in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the point at which the dead bird falls from the neck of the man?"

It was a point, however, at which neither he nor Barbara was capable of seeing the depth of the poem. Richard thought it was the new-born love of beauty that freed the mariner; he did not see that it was the love of life, the new-born sympathy with life.

"I don't even know what you are talking of,"

answered Barbara. "Do tell me. It sounds like something wonderful! Is it a story?"

"Yes—a wonderful story."

Richard had not attempted to understand Coleridge's philosophy, taking it for quite obsolete; and it was but doubtfully that he had made trial of his poems. Happily choosing *Christabel*, however, for a tasting-piece, he was immediately enchanted and absorbed; and never again had he been so keenly aware of disappointment as when he came to the end, and found, as an Irishman might say, that it was not there: a lump gathered in his throat; he flung the book from him, and it was a week before he could open it again.

The next poem he tried was *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which he read with almost equal delight, bewitched with many an individual phrase, with the melody unique of many a stanza, with the strangeness of its speech, with the loveliness of its real, and the wildness of its invented pictures. But he had not yet discovered, or even begun to foresee the marvel of its whole. A man must know something of repentance before he can understand *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The volume containing it had come into his hands as one of a set his father had to bind. It belonged to a worshipper of Coleridge, who had possessed himself of every edition of every book he had written, or had had a share in writing. There he read first the final form of *The Rime* as it appeared in the *Sibylline Leaves* of 1817: when he came to look at that in the *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1798, he found differences many and great between the two. He found also in the set an edition with a form of the poem

differing considerably from the last as well as the first. He had brought together and compared all these forms of the poem, noting every minutest variation—a mode of study which, in the case of a masterpiece, richly repays the student. It was no wonder, therefore, that Richard had almost every word of it on the very tip of his tongue.

He began to repeat the ballad, and went on, never for a moment intermitting his work. Without the least attempt at what is called recitation, of which happily he knew nothing, he made both sense and music tell, saying it as if he were for the hundredth time reading it aloud for his own delight. If his pronunciation was cockneyish, it was but a little so.

The very first stanza took hold of Barbara. She sat down by Richard's table, softly laid the dying bird in her lap, and listened with round eyes and parted lips, her rapt soul sitting in her ears.

But Richard had not gone far before he hesitated, his memory perplexed between the differing editions.

"Have you forgotten it? I am *so* sorry!" said Barbara. "It *is* wonderful—not like anything I ever heard, or saw, or tasted before. It smells like a New Zealand flower called——" Here she said a word Richard had never heard, and could never remember. "I don't wonder at your liking books if you find things in them of that sort!"

"I've not exactly forgotten it," answered Richard; "but I've copied out different editions for comparison, and they've got a little mixed in my head."

"But surely the printers, with all their blunders and changes, can't keep you from seeing what the author wrote!"

"The editions I mean are those of the author him-

self. He kept making changes, some of them very great changes. Not many people know the poem as Coleridge first published it."

"Coleridge Who was he?"

"The man that wrote the poem."

"Oh! He altered it afterwards?"

"Yes, very much."

"Did he make it better?"

"Much better."

"Then why should you care any more for the first way of it?"

"Just because it is different. A thing not so good may have a different goodness. A man may not be so good as another man, and yet have some good things in him the other has not. That implies that not every change he made was for the better. And where he has put a better phrase, or passage, the former may yet be good. So you see a new form may be much better, and yet the old form remain much too good to be parted with. In any case it is intensely interesting to see how and why he changed a thing or its shape, and to ponder wherein it is for the better or the worse. That is to take it like a study in natural history. In that we learn how an animal grows different to meet a difference in the supply of its needs; in the varying editions of a poem we see how it alters to meet a new requirement of the poet's mind. I don't mean the cases are parallel, but they correspond somehow. If I were a schoolmaster, I should make my pupils compare different forms of the same poem, and find out why the poet made the changes. That would do far more for them, I think, than comparing poets with each other. The better poets are—that is, the

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but good came, they said it was quite right to kill him, and told lies of him, and said he was a bad bird, and brought the fog and mist!—I wonder what's coming to them!—That's not the end, is it? It can't be!"

"No; it's not nearly done yet. It's only beginning."

"I'm so glad! Do go on."

She was eager as any child. Coleridge could not have desired a better listener.

"I know! *I* know!" she said, presently. "*We* were caught in a calm as we came home! My father is fond of the sea, and brought us round the Cape in a sailing-vessel. It was horrid. It lasted only three days, but I felt as if I should die. It wasn't long enough, I suppose, to draw out the creeping things!"

"Perhaps it wasn't near enough to the equator for them," answered Richard, and went on :—

> "Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
> Had I from old and young;
> Instead of the cross, the Albatross
> About my neck was hung."

"Poor man! And in such weather!" exclaimed Barbara. "And such a huge creature! I see! They thought now the killing of the bird had brought the calm, and they would have their revenge! A bad set, those sailors! People that deserve punishment always want to punish. Do go on."

When the skeleton-ship came, her eyes grew with listening like those of one in a trance.

"What a horrid, live dead woman!" she said. "Her whiteness is worse than any blackness. But I wish he had told us what Death was like!"

"In the first edition," returned Richard, much delighted that she missed what constructive symmetry required, "there *is* a description of Death. I doubt if you would like it, though. You don't like horrid things?"

"I do—if they should be horrid, and are horrid enough."

"Coleridge thought afterwards it was better to leave it out!"

"Tell it me, anyhow."

> "*His* bones were black with many a crack,
> All black and bare, I ween;
> Jet-black and bare, save where with rust,
> Of mouldy damps and charnel crust,
> They were patched with purple and green.

—There! What do you think of that?"

"*He* is nothing like so horrid as the woman!"

"She is more horrid in the first edition."

"How?"

> "*Her* lips are red, *her* looks are free,
> *Her* locks are yellow as gold;
> Her skin is as white as leprosy,
> And she is far liker Death than he;
> Her flesh makes the still air cold."

"I do think that is worse. Tell me again how the other goes."

> "The Night-Mare *Life-in-death* was she,
> Who thicks man's blood with cold."

"Yes, the other is worse! I can hardly tell why, except it be that you get at the sense of it easier. What does the Nightmare Life-in-Death mean?"

"I don't know. I can't quite get at it."

How should he? Richard was too close to the awful phantom to know that this was her portrait.

"There's another dreadful stanza in the first edition," he went on. "It is repeated in the second, but left out in the last. I fancy the poet let himself be overpersuaded to omit it. The poem was not actually printed without it until after his death: he had only put it in the *errata*, to be omitted.—When the woman whistles with joy at having won the ancient Mariner,

> "A gust of wind sterte up behind,

—as if, like the sailors, she had whistled for it:—

> "A gust of wind sterte up behind,
> And whistled through his bones;
> Through the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth,
> Half whistles and half groans;

and the spectre-bark is blown along by this breath coming out of the bosom of the skeleton."

"I think it was a great mistake to leave that verse out!" said Barbara. "There is no nasty horror in it! There *is* a little in the description of Death!"

"I think with you," returned Richard, more and more astonished at the insight of a girl who had read next to nothing. "Our lecturer at King's," he went on, "pointed out to us, in this part, what some call a blunder."

"What is it?"

"I will give you the verses again; and you see if you can pick it out."

"Do, please."

> "—Till clombe above the eastern bar
> The horned Moon, with one bright star
> Within the nether tip."

"I never saw a star there! But I see nothing wrong."

"Which is the nearest to us of the heavenly bodies?"

"The moon, I suppose."

"Certainly:—how, then, could a star come between us and it? For if the star were within the tip of the moon, it must be between us and the dark part of the moon!"

"I see! How stupid of me! But let me think!—If the star were just on the edge of the moon, between the horns, it would almost look as if it were within the tips—might it not?"

"That's the best that can be said for it anyhow,—except indeed that the poor ignorant sailor might, in the midst of such horrors, well make the blunder.—By the way, in the first edition it stood as you have just said: the line was,

Almost within the tips."

"What did he change it to?"

"He made it—

Within the nether tip."

"Why did he change it?"

"You would see that at the first glance, if you were used to riming."

"Are you a poet, then, as well as a blacksmith and a bookbinder?"

"Too much of a poet, I hope, to imagine myself more than a whittler of reeds!" answered Richard.

He was not sorry, however, to let Barbara know him for a poor relation of the high family of poets.

In truth, what best enabled him to understand their work, was the humble work of the same sort he did himself.

She did not understand what he meant by *a whittler of reeds*, but she rightly took what he said for a humble affirmative.

"I begin to be frightened at you!" she rejoined, half meaning it. "Who knows what else you may not be!"

"I am little enough of anything," answered Richard, "but nothing that I do not wish to be more of."

A short silence followed.

"You have not told me yet why he changed that line!" resumed Barbara.

"Better wait until I can show it you in the book: then you will see at once."

"Please, go on then. I don't know anything about the poem yet! I don't know why it was written!"

"You like some dreams, though they have no reason in them, don't you?"

"Yes; but then I suppose there is reason in the poem!"

"There is, indeed!" said Richard, and went on.

But presently she stopped him.

"One thing I should like to know before we go further," she said; "—why they all fell down except the ancient Mariner."

"You remember that Death and the woman were casting dice?"

"Yes."

"It is not very clear, but this is how I understand the thing:—They diced for the crew, one by one;

Death won every one till they came to the last, the ancient Mariner himself, and the woman, a sort of live Death, wins him. That is why she cries, 'I've won, won!' and whistles thrice—though she has won only one out of two hundred. I should think she was used to Death having more than she, else she wouldn't have been so pleased. Perhaps she seldom got one!"

"Yes, I see all that. But things oughtn't to go by the casting of dice. Money may, for that does not signify, but not the souls and bodies of men. It should not be the way in a poem any more than in the open world.—Let me think!—I have it!—They were not good men, those sailors! They first blamed, and then justified, and then again blamed and cruelly punished the poor mariner, who had done wrong certainly, but was doubtless even then sorry for it. He was cruel to a bird he did not know, and they were cruel to a man they did know! So they are taken and he is left—to come well out of it at last, I hope.—Yes, it's all right! Now you can go on."

She said nothing as he showed her the deck strewn so thick with the dead bodies, whose cursing eyes all looked one way; but when the heavenly contrast came:—

> "The moving Moon went up the sky,
> And nowhere did abide:
> Softly she was going up,
> And a star or two beside;"—

she gave a deep sigh of delight, and said—

"Ah, don't I know her, the beauty! Isn't it just many a time she has made me sick with the love of her, and her peace, and her ways of looking, and walking, and talking—for talk she does to those that

can listen hard! I dare say, in this old country where she's been about so long, you will think it silly to make so much of her; but you don't know here what it is to have her night after night for your one companion! She never grows a downright friend, though—a friend you've got at the heart of! She always looks at you as if she were saying—'Yes, yes; I know what you are thinking! but I have that in me you can never know, and I can never tell! It will go down with me to the grave of the great universe, and no one will ever know it! It is so lovely!—and oh, so sad!'"

She was silent. Richard could not answer. He saw her far away like the moon she spoke of. She was growing to him a marvel and a mystery. Something strange seemed befalling him. Was she weaving a spell about his soul? Was she fettering him for her slave? Was she one of the wild, bewildering creatures of ancient lonely belief, that are the souls of the loveliest things, but can detach themselves from them, and wander out in garments more immediately their own? Was she salamander or sylph, naïad or undine, oread or dryad?—But then she had such a head, and they were all rather silly!

When the ballad told how silvery were the sea-snakes in the moonlight, and how gorgeously varied in the red shadow, Richard looked for her to show delight in the play of their colors; but, though the sweet strong little mouth smiled, her brows looked more puzzled than pleased—which was a thing noteworthy.

Any marvel in Nature, however new, Barbara would have welcomed with bare delight; she would have asked neither the why, nor the how, nor the

final cause of the phenomenon—as if, being natural, it must be right, and she needed not trouble herself; but here, in this poem, a world born of the imagination of a man, she wanted to know about everything, whether it was, or would be, or ought to be just so —whether, in a word, every fact was souled with a reason, as it ought to be. Perhaps she demanded such satisfaction too soon; perhaps she ought to have waited for the whole, and, having found that a harmonious thing, then first have inquired into the truth of its parts; but so it was: she must know as she went, that she might know when she arrived! But in this she revealed a genuine artistic faculty—that she gave herself up to the poet, and allowed him to inspire her, yet *would* have reason from him.

Richard went on :—

"O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea."

Barbara jumped up, clapping her hands with delight.

"I knew something was going to happen!" she cried. "I knew it was coming all right!"

"You have not heard the end yet! You don't know what may be coming!" protested Richard.

"Nothing *can* go wrong now! The man's love is awake, and he will be sorrier and sorrier for what he

did! Instead of saying, 'The wrigglesome, slimy things!' he blesses them; and because he is going to be a friend to the other creatures in the house, and live on good terms with them, the body he had killed tumbles from his neck; the bad deed is gone down into the depth of the great sea, and he is able to say his prayers again;—no, not that exactly; it must be something better than saying prayers now!"—She paused a moment, then added, "It must be something I think I don't know yet!" and sat down.

Richard heard and admired: he thought that as she had perceived there was something better than saying prayers, she would pray no more!

"Go on; go on," she said. "But if you like to stop, I shan't mind. I have no fear now. It's all going right, and must soon come all right!"

"O sleep! It is a gentle thing,"

said Richard, going on.

"There it is!" she interrupted. "I knew it was all coming right! He can sleep now!"

"O sleep! It is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul."

Some one was in the room, the door of which had been open all the time. The sky was so cloudy, and the twilight so far advanced, that neither of them, Barbara absorbed in the poem and Richard in the last of his day's work, had heard any one enter.

"Why don't you ring for a lamp?" said Lestrange.

"There is no occasion; I have just done," answered Richard.

"You cannot surely see in this light!" said Arthur, who was short-sighted. "You certainly were not at your work when I came into the room!"

He thought Richard had caught up the piece of leather he was paring, in order to deceive him.

"Indeed, sir, I was."

"You were not. You were reading!"

"I was not reading, sir. I was busy with the last of my day's work."

"Do not tell me you were not reading: I heard you!"

"You did hear me, sir; but you did not hear me reading," rejoined Richard, growing angry with the tone of the young man, and with his unreadiness to believe him.

Many workmen, having told a lie, would have been more indignant at not being believed, than was Richard speaking the truth; still, he was growing angry.

"You must have a wonderful memory, then!" said Lestrange. "But, excuse me, we don't care to hear your voice in the house."

The same moment, he either discovered, or pretended to discover, Barbara's presence.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Wylder!" he said. "I did not know he was amusing you! I did not see you were in the room!"

"I suppose," returned Barbara—and it savored of the savage Lestrange sometimes called her—"you will be ordering the nightingales not to sing in *your* apple-trees next!"

"I don't understand you!"

"Neither do you understand Mr. Tuke, or you would not speak to him that way!"

She rose and walked to the door, but turned as she went and added—

"He was repeating the loveliest poem I ever heard —*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*—I didn't know there could be such a poem!" she added, simply.

"It is not one I care about. But you need not take it second-hand from Tuke: I will lend it you."

"Thank you!" said Barbara, in a tone which was not of gratitude, and left the room.

Lestrange stood for a moment, but finding nothing suitable to say, turned and followed her, while Richard bit his lip to keep himself silent. He knew, if he spoke, there would be an end; and he did not want this to be his last sight of the wonderful creature!

Barbara went to the door with the intention of going to the stables for Miss Brown and galloping straight home. But she bethought herself that so she might seem to be ashamed. She was not Arthur's guest! He had been insolent to her friend, who had done more for her already than ever Arthur was likely to do, but that was no reason why she should run away from him—just the contrary! She *would* like to punish him for it somehow!—not shoot him, for she would not kill a pigeon, and to kill a man would be worse, though he wasn't so nice as a pigeon!—but she would like—yes, she *would* like to give him just three good cuts across the shoulders with her new riding-whip! What right had he to speak so to his superior? By being a *true* workman, Mr. Tuke was a gentleman! Could Arthur Lestrange have talked like that? Could he have spoken the poetry like that? The bookbinder was worth a hundred of him! Could Arthur shoe a horse? What if the working man were to turn out the real lord of the creation,

and the gentleman have to black his boots! There was something like it in the gospel!

She did not know that in general the working man is as foolish and unfit as the rich man; that he only wants to be rich, and trample on his own past. The working man *may* perish like the two hundred of the crew, and the rich man *may* be saved like the Ancient Mariner!

It is the poor man that gives the rich man all the pull on him, by cherishing the same feelings as the rich man concerning riches, by fancying the rich man because of his riches the greater man, and longing to be rich like him. A man that can *do* things is greater than any man who only *has* things. True, a rich man can get mighty things done, but he does not do them. He may be much the greater for willing them to be done, but he is not the greater for the actual doing of them.

"At any rate," said Barbara to herself, "I like this working man better than that gentleman!"

Richard stood for a while boiling with indignation. He would have cared less if he had been sure he had answered him properly, but he could not remember what he had said.

The clock struck the hour that ended his workday. Instead of sitting down to read, he set out for the smithy. It was not a week since he had seen his grandfather, but he wanted motion, and desired a human face that belonged to him. It was rather dark when he reached it, but the old man had not yet dropped work. The sparks were flying wild about his gray head as Richard drew near.

"Can I help you, grandfather?" he said.

"No, no, lad; your hands are too soft by this time

—with your bits of brass wheels, and scraps of leather, and needles, and paste! No, no, lad;—thou cannot help the old man to-night.—But you're not in earnest, are you?" he added, looking up suddenly. "You ain't left your place?"

"No, but my day's work being over, why shouldn't I help you to get yours over! When first I came you expected me to do so!"

"Look here, lad!—as a man gets older he comes to think more of fair play, and less of his rights: it seems to me that not your time only, but your strength as well belongs to the man who hires you; and if you weary yourself helping me, who have no claim, you cannot do so much or so good work for your master!—Do you see sense in that?"

"Indeed I do! I think you are quite right."

"It is strange," Simon went on, "how age makes you more particular! The thing I would have done without thinking when I was young, I think twice of now. Is that what we were sent here for—to grow honest, I wonder?—Depend upon it," he resumed after a moment's silence, "there's a somewhere where the thing's taken notice of! There's a somebody as thinks about it!"

After more talk, and a cup of tea at the cottage, Richard set out for the lodgeless gate, already mentioned more than once, to which the housekeeper had lent him a key.

He had not got far into the park, when to his surprise he perceived, a little way off on the grass, a small figure gliding swiftly toward him through the dusk rather than the light of the moon, which, but just above the horizon, sent little of her radiance to the spot. It was Barbara.

"I have been watching for you ever so long!" she said. "They told me you had gone out, and I thought you might come home this way."

"I wish I had known! I wouldn't have kept you waiting," returned Richard.

"I want the rest of the poem," she said. "It was horrid to have Arthur interrupt us! He was abominably rude too."

"He certainly had no right to speak to me as he did. And if he had confessed himself wrong, or merely said he had made a mistake, I should have thought no more about it. I hope it is not true you are going to marry him, miss!—because——"

"If I thought one of the family said so, I would sleep in the park to-night. I would not enter the house again. When I marry, it will be a gentleman; and Mr. Lestrange is not a gentleman—at least he did not behave like one to-day. Come, tell me the rest of the poem. We have plenty of time here."

The young bookbinder was perplexed. He had not much knowledge of the world, but he could not bear the thought of the servants learning that they were in the park together. At the same time he saw that he must not even hint at imprudence. Her will was not by him to be scanned! She must be allowed to know best! A single tone of hesitation would be an insult! He must take care of her without seeming to do so! If they walked gently, they would finish the poem as they came near the house: there he would leave her, and return by the lodge-gate.

"Where did we leave off?" he said.

His brief silence had seemed to Barbara but a moment spent in recalling.

"We left off at the place where the bird fell from

his neck—no, just after that, where he falls asleep, as well he might, after it was gone."

The moon was now peeping, in little spots of light, through the higher foliage, and casting a doubtful, ghostly sediment of shine around them. The night was warm. Glow-worms lay here and there, brooding out green light in the bosom of the thick soft grass. There was no wind save what the swift wing of a bat, sweeping close to their heads, would now and then awake. The creature came and vanished like an undefined sense of evil at hand. But it was only Richard who thought that; nothing such crossed the starry clearness of Barbara's soul. Her skirt made a buttony noise with the heads of the rib-grass. Her red cloak was dark in the moonlight. She threw back the hood, and coming out of its shadow like another moon from a cloud, walked the earth with bare head. Her hands too were bare, and glimmering in the night-gleam. He saw the rings on the small fingers shimmer and shine: she was as fond of color and flash as Lord St. Albans! Higher and higher rose the moon. Her light on the grass-blades wove them into a carpet with its weft of faint moonbeams. The small dull mirrors of the evergreen leaves glinted in the thickets, as the two went by, like the bits of ill-polished glass in an Indian tapestry. The moon was everywhere, filling all the hollow over-world, and forever alighting on their heads. Far away they saw the house, a remote something, scarce existent in the dreaming night, the gracious-ghastly poem, and the mingling, harmonizing moon. It was much too far away to give them an anxious thought, and for long it seemed, like death, to be coming no nearer; but they were mov-

ing toward it all the time, and it was even growing a more insistent fact. Thus they walked at once in the two blended worlds of the moonlight and the tale, while Richard half-chanted the music-speech of the most musical of poets, telling of the roaring wind that the mariner did not feel, of the flags of electric light, of the dances of the wan stars, of the sighing of the sails, of the star-dogged moon, and the torrent-like falls of the lightning down the mountainous cloud—for so Barbara, who had seen two or three tropical thunderstorms, explained to Richard the lightning which

> fell with never a jag,
> A river steep and wide;—

until that groan arose from the dead men, and the bodies heaved themselves up on their feet, and began to work the ropes, and worked on till sunrise, and the mariner knew that not the old souls but angels had entered into them, by their gathering about the mast, and sending such a strange lovely hymn through their dead throats up to the sun.

When Richard repeated the stanza—

> "It ceased; yet still the sails made on
> A pleasant noise till noon,
> A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune;"

Barbara uttered a prolonged "Oh!" and again was silent, listening to the talk of the elemental spirits, feeling the very wind of home that blew on the mariner, seeing the lighthouse, and the hill, and the weather-cock on the church-spire, and the white bay,

and the shining seraphs with the crimson shadows, and the sinking ship, and the hermit that made the mariner tell his story as he was telling it now.

But when Richard came to the words—

> "He prayeth well, who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast.
>
> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small,
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all,"—

she clapped her hands together; and when he ended them, she cried out—

"I was sure of it! I knew something would come to tie it all up together into one bundle! That's it! That's it. The love of everything is the garden-bed out of which grow the roses of prayer!—But what am I saying!" she added, checking herself; "I love everything, at least everything that comes near me, and I never pray!"

"Of course not! Why should you?" said Richard.

"Why should I not?"

"You would if it were reasonable!"

"I will, then! To love all the creatures and not have a word to say to the God that made them for loving them beforehand—is that reasonable?"

"No, if a God did make them."

"They could not make themselves!"

"No; nothing could make itself."

"Then somebody must have made them!"

"Who?"

"Why, the one that could and did—who else?"

"We know nothing about such a somebody. All

we know is, that there they are, and we have got to love them!"

"Ah!" she said, and looked up into the wide sky, where now the "wandering moon" was alone,

> Like one that had been led astray
> Through the heaven's wide pathless way,

and gazed as if she searched for the Somebody. "I should like to see the one that made that!" she said at last. "Think of knowing the very person that made that poor pigeon, and has got it now!—and made Miss Brown—and the wind! I must find him! He can't have made me and not care when I ask him to speak to me! You say he is nowhere! I don't believe there is any nowhere, so he can't be there! Some people may be content with things; I shall get tired of them, I know, if I don't get behind them! A thing is nothing without what things it! A gift is nothing without what gives it! Oh, dear! I know what I mean, but I can't say it!"

"You don't know what you mean, but you do say it!" thought Richard.

He was nowise repelled by her enthusiasm, for there was in it nothing assailant, nothing too absurdly superstitious. He did not care to answer her.

They went walking toward the house and were silent. The moon went on with her silentness: she never stops being silent. When they felt near the house, they fell to walking slower, but neither knew it. Barbara spoke again:

"Just fancy!" she said, "—if God were all the time at our backs, giving us one lovely thing after another, trying to make us look round and see who it was that was so good to us! Imagine him stand-

ing there, and wondering when his little one would look round, and see him, and burst out laughing—no, not laughing—yes, laughing—laughing with delight—or crying, I don't know which! If I had him to love as I should love one like that, I think I should break my heart with loving him—I should love him to the killing of me! What! all the colors and all the shapes, and all the lights, and all the shadows, and the moon, and the wind, and the water!—and all the creatures—and the people that one would love so if they would let you!—and all——"

"And all the pain, and the dying, and the disease, and the wrongs, and the cruelty!" interposed Richard.

She was silent. After a moment or two she said—

"I think I will go in now. I feel rather cold. I think there must be a fog, though I can't see it."

She gave a little shiver. He looked in her face. Was it the moon, or was it something in her thoughts that made the sweet countenance look so gray? Could his mere suggestion of the reverse, the wrong side of the web of creation, have done it? Surely not!

"I think I want some one to say *must* to me!" she said, after another pause. "I feel as if——"

There she stopped. Richard said nothing. Some instinct told him he might blunder.

He stood still. Barbara went on a few steps, then turned and said—

"Are you not going in?"

"Not just yet," he answered. "Please to remember that if I can do anything for you——"

"You are very kind. I am much obliged to you.

If you know another rime,——But I think I shall have to give up poetry."

"It will be hard to find another so good," returned Richard.

"Good-night," she said.

"Good-night, miss!" answered Richard, and walked away, with a loss at his heart. The poem has already ceased to please her! He had made the lovely lady more thoughtful, and less happy than before!

"She has been taught to believe in a God," he said to himself. "She is afraid he will be angry with her, because, in her company, I dared question his existence! A generous God—isn't he! If he be anywhere, why don't he let us see him? How can he expect us to believe in him, if he never shows himself? But if he did, why should I worship him for being, or for making me? If I didn't want him, and I don't, I certainly shouldn't worship him because I saw him. I couldn't. If Nature is cruel, as she certainly is, and he made her, then he is cruel too! There cannot be such a God, or, if there be, it cannot be right to worship him!"

He did not reflect that if he had wanted him, he would not have waited to see him before he worshipped him.

But Barbara was saying to herself—

"What if he *has* shown himself to me some time —one of those nights, perhaps, when I was out till the sun rose—and I didn't know him!—How frightful if there should be nobody at all up there—nobody anywhere all round!"

She stared into the milky, star-sapphire-like blue,

as if, out of the sweetly veiled terror-gulf, she would, by very gazing, draw the living face of God.

Verily the God that knows *how not* to reveal himself, must also know how *best* to reveal himself! If there be a calling child, there must be an answering father!

CHAPTER XXIII.

A HUMAN GADFLY.

FROM so early an age had Richard been accustomed to despise a certain form he called God, which stood in the gallery of his imagination, carved at by the hands of successive generations of sculptors, some hard, some feeble, some clever, some stupid, all conventional and devoid of prophetic imagination, that his antagonism had long taken the shape of an angry hostility to the notion of any God whatever. Richard could see a thing *to* be false, that is, he could deny, but he was not yet capable either of discovering or receiving what was true, because he had not yet set himself to know the truth. To oppose, to refuse, to deny, is not to *know the truth*, is not *to be true* any more than it is to be false. Whatever good may lie in the destroying of the false, the best hammer of the iconoclast will not serve withal to carve the celestial form of the Real; and when the iconoclast becomes the bigot of negation, and declares the non-existence of any form worthy of worship, because he has destroyed so many unworthy, he passes into a fool. That he has never conceived a deity such as he could worship, is a poor ground to any but the man himself for saying such cannot exist; and to him it is but a ground lightly vaulted over the vacuity self-importance. Such a divine form may yet stand in the adytum of this or that man whom he and the world count an idiot.

Into the workshop of Richard's mind was now introduced, by this one disclosure of the mind of Barbara, a new idea of divinity, vague indeed as new, but one with which he found himself compelled to have some dealing. One of the best services true man can do a neighbor, is to persuade him—I speak in a parable—to house his children for a while, that he may know what they are: the children of another may be the saving of his children and his whole house. Alas for the man the children of whose brain are the curse of the household into which they are received! But from Barbara's house Richard had taken into his a vital protoplasmic idea that must work, and would never cease to work until the house itself was all divine—the idea, namely, of a being to call God, who was a delight to think of, a being concerning whom the great negation was that of everything Richard had hitherto associated with the word God. The one door to admit this formal notion was hard to open: and when admitted, the figure was not easy to set up so that it could be looked at. The human niche where the idea of a God must stand, was in Richard's house occupied by the most hideous falsity. On the pedestal crouched the goblin of a Japanese teapot.

It was not pleasant to Richard to imagine any one with rights over him. It may be that some persist in calling up the false idea of such a one hitherto presented to them, in order to avoid feeling obligation to believe in him. For the notion of a God is one from which naturally a thoughtful man must feel more or less recoil while as yet he knows nothing of the being himself, or of the nature of his creative rights, the rights of perfect, self-refusing, devoted fatherhood. It is one thing to seem to know with

the brain, quite another to know with the heart. But even in the hope-lighted countenance of Barbara, even in the tones in which she suggested the presence of a soul that meant and was all that the beautiful world hinted and seemed, Richard could not fail to meet something of the true idea of a God.

Naturally also, his notion of the God in whom he felt that Barbara was at least ready to believe, assumed something of the look of Barbara who was being drawn toward him; so that now the graces of the world, all its lovely impacts upon his senses, began to be mixed up in his mind with Barbara and her God. Barbara was beginning to infect him with—shall I call it the superstition of a God? Whatever it may be called, it was very far from being religion yet. The fact was only this—that the idea of a God worth believing in was coming a little nearer to him, was becoming to him a little more thinkable.

He began to feel his heart drawn at times, in some strange, tenderer fashion, hitherto unknown to him, to the blue of the sky, especially in the first sweetness of a summer morning. His soul would now and then seem to go out of him, in a passion of embrace, to the simplest flower: the flower would be, for a moment, just its self to him. He would spread out his arms to the wind, now when it met him in its strength, now when it but kissed his face. He never consented with himself that it was one force in all the forms that drew him—that perhaps it was the very God, the All in all about him. Neither did he question much with himself as to how the development, rather than change, had begun. Whether God did this, or was this, or it was only the possess-

ing Barbara that cast her light out of his eyes on the things he saw and felt, he scarcely asked; but fully he recognized the fact that Nature was more alive than she ever had been to him who had always loved her.

The thought of Barbara went on growing dear to him. He never pondered anything but the girl herself, cherished no dreams of her becoming more to him, of her ever being nearer than away there; just to know her was now, and henceforward ever would be the gladness of his life. If that life was but for a season; if the very core of life was decay; if life was because nobody could help its being; if it died because no one could keep it from dying; yet were there two facts fit almost to embalm the body of this living death: Barbara, and the world which was the body of Barbara! So life carried the day, if but the day, and the heart of Richard rejoiced in the midst of perishings. Only, the night was coming in which no man can rejoice.

Was he then presuming to be in love with Barbara? I do not care to meet the question. If I knew what the mysterious word, *love*, meant, I might be able to answer it, but what should I thus gain or give? I know he loved her. I know that a divine power of truth and beauty had laid hold upon him, and was working in him as the powers of God alone can work in man, for they are the same by which he lives and moves and has his being, and to life are more than meat and drink, than sun and air.

Instead of blaming as a matter of course the person who does not believe in a God, we should think first whether his notional God is a God that ought, or a God that ought not to be believed in. Perhaps

he only is to be blamed who, by inattention to duty, has become less able to believe in a God than he was once: because he did not obey the true voice, whencesoever it came, God may have to let him taste what it would be to have no God. For aught I know, a man may have been born of so many generations of unbelief, that now, at this moment, he cannot believe; that now, at this moment, he has no notion of a God at all, and cannot care whether there be a God or not; but he can mind what he knows he ought to mind. That will, that alone can clear the moral atmosphere, and make it possible for the true idea of a God to be born into it.

For some time Richard saw little of Barbara.

The heads of the house did not interfere with him. Lady Ann would now and then sail through the room like an iceberg; Sir Wilton would come in, give a glance at the shelves and a grin, and walk out again with a more or less gouty gait; so much was about all their contact. Arthur was a little ashamed of having spoken to him as he did, and had again become in a manner friendly. He had seen several decaying masses, among the rest the Golding of their difference, become books in his hands, and again he had grown sufficiently interested in the workman to feel in him something more than the workman. He was on the way to perceive that, in certain insignificant things, such as imagination, reading, insight, and general faculty, not to mention conscience, generosity, and goodness of heart, Richard was out of sight before the ruck of gentlemen. He saw already that in some things, thought a good deal of at his college, Richard was more capable than himself. He found in him too what seemed to him a rare notion

of art. In truth Richard's advance in this region was as yet but small, for he was guided only by his limited efforts in verse; none the less, however, was he far ahead of Arthur, who saw only what was shown him. In literature Arthur had already learned something from Richard, and knew it. He had indeed, without knowing it begun to look up to him.

Richard also had discovered good in Arthur—among other things a careful regard to his word, and to his father's tenantry. There was of course, in a scanty nature like his, a good deal of the lord bountiful mingled with his behavior to his social inferiors on the property: he posed to himself as a condescending landlord.

The only one in the house who gave Richard trouble, was the child Victoria. The way she always took to show her liking, was to annoy its object. Never was name less fitting than hers: there was no victory in her. She could but fly about like the veriest mosquito. Richard let her come and go unheeded, except when her proximity to his work made him anxious. But the little vixen would not consent to be naught any smallest while. She would rather be abused than remain unnoticed. When she found that her standing and staring procured no attention from the bookbinder, she would begin to handle his tools, and ask what this and that was for, giving, like a woman of fashion, no heed to any answer he accorded her. Learning thus, that is, by experiment, how to annoy him, she did not let opportunity lack. When school was over in the morning, and she could go where she pleased, she went often to the library; and as no one willingly asked where she was, the chief pleasure of her acquaintance lying in the assur-

ance that she was nowhere at hand, Richard had to endure many things from her; and things that do not seem worth enduring, are not unfrequently the hardest to endure.

The behavior of the child grew worse and worse. She would more than touch everything, and that thing the most persistently which Richard was most anxious to have let alone, causing him no little trouble at times to set right what she had injured. Worst of all was her persecution when she found him using gold-leaf. She would come behind him and blow the film away just as he had got it flat on his cushion, or laid on the spot where his tool was about to fix a portion of it. Her mischief was not even irradiated by childish laughter; there was never any sign of frolic on her monkey face, except the steely glitter of her sharp, black-bead-eyes might be supposed to contain some sprinkle of fun in its malice. Expostulation was not of the slightest use, and sometimes it was all Richard could do to keep his hands off her. Now she would look as stolid as if she did not understand a word he said; now pucker up her face into a most unpleasant grin of derision and contemptuous defiance.

One day when he happened to be using the polishing-iron, Vixen, as her brothers called her, came in and began to play with the paste. Richard turned with the iron in his hand, which he had just taken from the brasier. He was rubbing it bright and clear, and she noted this, but had not seen him take it from the fire: she caught at it, to spoil it with her pasty fingers. As quickly she let it go, but did not cry, though her eyes filled. Richard saw, and his heart gave away. He caught the little hand so swift to do

evil, and would have soothed its pain. She pulled it from him, crying, "You nasty man! How dare you?" and ran to the door, where she turned and made a hideous face at him. The same moment, by a neighboring door that opened from another passage, in came Barbara, and before Vixen was well aware of her presence, had dealt her such a box on the ear that she burst into a storm of wrathful weeping.

"You're a brute, Bab," she cried. "I'll tell mamma!"

"Do, you little wretch!" returned Barbara, whose flushed face looked lovelily childlike in its indignation beside the furious phiz of the tormenting imp.

The monkey-creature left the room, sobbing; and Barbara turned and was gone before Richard could thank her.

He heard no more of the matter, and for some time had no farther trouble with Victoria.

Barbara had the kindest of hearts, but there was nothing *soft* about her. She held it a sin to spoil any animal, not to say a child. For she had a strong feeling, initiated possibly by her black nurse, that the animals went on living after death, whence she counted it a shame not to teach them; and held that, if a sharp cut would make child or dog behave properly, the woman was no lover of either who would spare it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RICHARD AND WINGFOLD.

BARBARA had more than once or twice heard Mr. Wingfold preach, but had not once listened, or even waked to the fact that she had not listened. Unaccustomed in childhood to any special regard of tne Sunday, she had neither pleasant nor unpleasant associations with church-going; but she liked a good many things better, and as she always did as she liked except she saw reason to the contrary, she had hitherto gone to church rather seldom. She might perhaps have sooner learned to go regularly but for her mother's extraordinary behavior there: certainly she could not sit in the same pew with her reading her novel. Since Mr. Wingfold had taken the part of the prophet Nathan, and rebuked her, she had indeed ceased to go to church, but Barbara, as I have said, was as yet only now and then drawn thitherward.

Mr. Wingfold was almost as different from the clergyman of Richard's idea, as was Richard's imagined God from any believable idea of God. The two men had never yet met, for what should bring a workimg-man and the clergyman of the next parish together? But one morning—he often went for a walk in the early morning—Richard saw before him, in the middle of a field-path, seated on a stile and stopping his way, the back of a man in a gray suit, evidently enjoying, like himself, the hour before sunrise. He knew somehow that he was not a

working-man, but he did not suspect him one of the obnoxious class which lives by fooling itself and others. Wingfold heard Richard's step, looked round, knew him at once as an artisan of some sort, and saw in him signs of purpose and character strong for his years.

"Jolly morning!" he said.

"It is indeed, sir!" answered Richard.

"I like a walk in the morning better than at any other time of the day!" said Wingfold.

"Well, sir, I do so too, though I can't tell why. I've often tried, but I haven't yet found out what makes the morning so different."

"Come!" thought the clergyman; "here's something I haven't met with too much of!"

Richard remarked to himself that, whoever the gentleman was, he was certainly not stuck-up. They might have parted late the night before, instead of meeting now for the first time.

"Are you a married man?" asked Wingfold.

"No, sir," answered Richard, surprised that a stranger should put the question.

"If you had been," Wingfold went on, "I should have been surer of your seeing what I mean when I say, that to be out before sunrise is like looking at your best friend asleep—that is, before her sun, her thought, namely, is up. Watching her face then, you see it come to life, grow radiant with sunrise."

"But," rejoined Richard, "I have seen a person asleep whose face made it quite evident that thought was awake! It was shining through!"

"Shining through, certainly," said Wingfold, "not up. I doubt indeed if, during any sleep, thought is quite in abeyance."

"Not when we are dead asleep, sir?—so dead that when we wake we don't remember anything?"

"If thought in such a case must be *proved*, it will have to go for non-existent. Yet, when you reflect that sometimes you discover that you must, a few minutes before, wide awake, have done something which you have no recollection of having done, and which, but for the fact remaining evident to your sight, you would not believe you had done, you must feel doubtful as to the loss of consciousness in sleep."

"Yes; that must give us pause!"

"Hamlet!" said the clergyman to himself. "That's good!—You may have read from top to bottom of a page, perhaps," he went on, "without being able to recall a word: would you say no thought had passed through your mind in the process?—that the words had suggested nothing as you read them?"

"No, sir, I should be inclined to say that I forgot as fast as I read; that, as I read, I seemed to know the thing I read, but the process of forgetting kept pace for pace alongside the process of reading."

"I quite agree with you.—Now I wonder whether you will agree with me in what I am going to suggest next!"

"I can't tell that, sir," said Richard—somewhat unnecessarily; but Wingfold was pleased to find him cautious.

"I think," the parson continued, "that what I want in order to be able afterward to recollect a thing, is to be not merely conscious of the thing when it comes, but at the same moment conscious of myself. To remember, I must be self-conscious as well as thing-conscious."

"There I cannot quite follow you."

"When I learn the meaning of a word, I know the word; but when I say to myself, 'I know the word,' there comes a reflection of the word back from the mirror of my mind, making a second impression, and after that I am at least not so likely to forget it."

"I think I can follow you so far," said Richard.

"When, then," pursued the parson. "I think about the impression that the word makes upon me, how it is affecting me with the knowledge of itself, then I am what I should call self-conscious of the word—conscious not only that I know the word, but that I know the phenomena of knowing the word—conscious of what I am as regards my knowing of the word."

"I understand so far, sir—at least I think I do."

"Then you will allow that a word with its reflection and mental impact thus operated upon by the mind is not so likely to be forgotten as one understood only in the first immediate way?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Well, then—mind I am only suggesting; I am not proclaiming a fact, still less laying down a law; I am not half sure enough about it for that—so it is with our dreams. We see, or hear, and are conscious that we do, in our dreams; our consciousness shines through our sleeping features to the eyes that love us; but when we wake we have forgotten everything. There was thought there, but not thought that could be remembered. When, however, you have once said to yourself in a dream, 'I think I am dreaming;' you always, I venture to suspect, remember that experience when you wake from it!"

"I daresay you do, sir. But there are many dreams we never suspect to be dreams while we are dreaming them, which yet we remember all the same when we come awake!"

"Yes, surely; and many people have such memories as hold every word and every fact presented to them. But I was not meaning to discuss the phenomena of sleep; I only meant to support my simile that to see the world before the sun is up, is like looking on the sleeping face of a friend. There is thought in the sleeping face of your friend, and thought in the twilight face of nature; but the face awake with thought is the world awake with sunlight."

"There I cannot go with you, sir," said Richard, who, for all the impression Barbara had made upon him, had not yet thought of the world as in any sense alive; it was to him but an aggregate of laws and results, the great dissecting-room of creation, the happy hunting ground of the goddess who calls herself Science, though she can claim to understand as yet no single fact.

"Why?" asked Wingfold.

"Because I cannot receive the simile at all. I cannot allow expression of thought where no thought is."

Here a certain look on the face of the young workman helped the parson toward understanding the position he meant to take.

"Ah!" he answered, "I see I mistook you! I understand now! Sleep she or wake she, you will not allow thought on the face of Nature! Am I right?"

"That is what I would say, sir," answered Richard.

"We must look at that!" returned Wingfold. "That would be scanned!—You would conceive the world as a sort of machine that goes for certain purposes—like a clock, for instance, whose duty it is to tell the time of the day?—Do I represent you truly?"

"So far, sir. Only one machine may have many uses!"

"True! A clock may do more for us than tell the time! It may tell how fast it is going, and wake solemn thought. But if you came upon a machine that constantly waked in you—not thoughts only, but the most delicate and indescribable feelings—what would you say then? Would you allow thought there?"

"Surely not that the machine was thinking!"

"Certainly not. But would you allow thought concerned in it? Would you allow that thought must have preceded and occasioned its existence? Would you allow that thought therefore must yet be interested in its power to produce thought, and might, if it chose, minister to the continuance or enlargement of the power it had originated?"

"Perhaps I should be compelled to allow that much in regard to a clock even!—Are we coming to the Paley-argument, sir?" said Richard.

"I think not," answered Wingfold. "My argument seems to me one of my own. It is not drawn from design but from operation: where a thing wakes thought and feeling, I say, must not thought and feeling be somewhere concerned in its origin?"

"Might not the thought and feeling come by

association, as in the case of the clock suggesting the flight of time?"

"I think our associations can hardly be so multiform, or so delicate, as to have a share in bringing to us half of the thoughts and feelings that nature wakes in us. If they have such a share, they must have reference either to a fore-existence, or to relations hidden in our being, over which we have no control; and equally in such case are the thoughts and feelings waked in us, not by us. I do not want to argue; I am only suggesting that, if the world moves thought and feeling in those that regard it, thought and feeling are somehow concerned in the world. Even to wake old feelings, there must be a likeness to them in what wakes them, else how could it wake them? In a word, feeling must have put itself into the shape that awakes feeling. Then there is feeling in the thing that bears that shape, although itself it does not feel. Therefore I think it may be said that there is more thought, or, rather, more expression of thought, in the face of the world when the sun is up, than when he is not—as there is more thought in a face awake than in a face asleep.—Ah, there is the sun! and there are things that ought never to be talked about in their presence! To talk of some things even behind their backs will keep them away!"

Richard neither understood his last words, nor knew that he did not understand them. But he did understand that it was better to watch the sunrise than to talk of it.

Up came the child of heaven, conquering in the truth, in the might of essential being. It was no argument, but the presence of God that silenced the

racked heart of Job. The men stood lost in the swift changes of his attendant colors—from red to gold, from the human to the divine—as he ran to the horizon from beneath, and came up with a rush, eternally silent. With a moan of delight Richard turned to his gazing companion, when he beheld that on his face which made him turn from him again: he had seen what was not there for human eyes! The radiance of Wingfold's countenance, the human radiance that met the solar shine, surpassed even that which the moon and the sky and the sleeping earth brought out that night upon the face of Barbara! The one was the waking, the other but the sweetly dreaming world.

Richard refused to let any emotion, primary or reflex, influence his opinions; they must be determined by fact and severe logical outline. Whatever was not to him definite—that is, was not by him formally conceivable, must not be put in the category of things to be believed; but he had not a notion how many things he accepted unquestioning, which were yet of this order; and not being only a thing that thought, but a thing as well that was thought, he could not help being more influenced by such a sight than he would have chosen to be, and the fact that he was so influenced remained. Happily, the choice whether we shall be influenced is not given us; happily, too, the choice whether we shall obey an influence *is* given us.

Without a word, Richard lifted his hat to the stranger, and walked on, leaving him where he stood, but taking with him a germ of new feeling, which would enlarge and divide and so multiply. When he got to the next stile, he looked back, and saw him *seated* as at first, but now reading.

CHAPTER XXV.

WINGFOLD AND HIS WIFE.

THOMAS WINGFOLD closed his book, replaced it in his pocket, got down from the stile, turned his face toward home, crossed field after field, and arrived just in time to meet his wife as she came down the stairs to breakfast.

"Have you had a nice walk, Thomas?" she asked.

"Indeed I have!" he answered. "Almost from the first I was right out in the open."—His wife knew what he meant.—"Before the sun came up," he went on, "I had to go in, and come out at another door; but I was soon very glad of it. I had met a fellow who, I think, will pluck his feet out of the mud before long."

"Have you asked him to the rectory?"

"No."

"Shall I write and ask him?"

"No, my wife. For one thing, you can't: I don't know his name, and I don't know what he is, or where he lives. But we shall meet again soon."

"Then you have made an appointment with him!"

"No, I haven't. But there's an undertow bringing us on to each other. It would spoil all if he thought I threw a net for him. I do mean to catch him if I can, but I will not move till the tide brings him into my arms. At least, that is how the thing

looks to me at present. I believe enough not to make haste. I don't want to throw salt on any bird's tail, but I do want the birds to come hopping about me, that I may tell them what I know!"

As near as he could, Wingfold recounted the conversation he had had with Richard.

"He was a fine looking fellow," he said, "—not exactly a gentleman, but not far off it; little would make him one. He looked a man that could do things, but I did not satisfy myself as to what might be his trade. He showed no sign of it, or made any allusion to it. But he was more at home in the workshop of his own mind than is at all usual with fellows of his age."

"It must," said Helen, "be old Simon Armour's grandson! I have heard of him from several quarters; and your description would just fit him. I know somebody that could tell you about him, but I wish I knew anybody that could tell us about her—I mean Miss Wylder."

"I like the look of that girl!" said the parson, warmly. "What makes you think she could tell us about my new acquaintance?"

"Only an impertinent speech of that little simian, Vixen Lestrange. I forget what she said, but it left the impression of an acquaintance between Bab, as she called her, and some working fellow the child could not bear."

"The enmity of that child is praise. I wonder how the Master would have treated her! He could not have taken her between his knees, and said whosoever received her received him! A child-mask with a monkey inside it will only serve a sentimental mother to talk platitudes about!"

"Don't be too hard on the monkeys, Tom!" said his wife. "You don't know what they may turn out to be, after all!"

"Surely it is not too hard on the monkeys to call them monkeys!"

"No; but when the monkey has already begun to be a child!"

"There is the whole point! Has the monkey always begun to be a child when he gets the shape of a child?—Miss Wylder is not quite so seldom in church now, I think!"

"I saw her there last Sunday. But I'm afraid she wasn't thinking much about what you were saying—she sat with such a stony look in her eyes! She did seem to come awake for one moment, though!"

"Tell me."

"I could hardly take my eyes off her, my heart was so drawn to her. There was a mingling of love and daring, almost defiance, in her look, that seemed to say, 'If you are worth it—if you are worth it—then through fire and water!' All at once a flash lighted up her lovely child-face—and what do you think you were at the moment saying?—that the flower of a plant was deeper than the root of it: that was what roused her!"

"And I when I found what I had said, thought, with myself what a fool I was to let out things my congregation could not possibly understand!—But to reach one is, in the end, to reach all!"

"I must in honesty tell you, however," pursued Mrs. Wingfold, "that the next minute she looked as far off as before; nor did she shine up once again that I saw."

"I will be glad, though," said Wingfold, "because

of what you tell me! It shows there is a window in her house that looks in my direction: some signal may one day catch her eye! That she has a character of her own, a real one, I strongly suspect. Her mother more than interests me. She certainly has a fine nature. How much better is a fury than a fish! You cannot be downright angry save in virtue of the love possible to you. The proper person, who always does and says the correct thing—well, I think that person is almost sure to be a liar. At the same time, the contradictions in the human individual are bewildering, even appalling!—Now I must go to my study, and think out a thing that's bothering me!—By the way,"—he always said that when he was going to make her a certain kind of present; she knew what was coming—"here's something for you—if you can read it! I had just scribbled it this morning when the young man came up. I made it last night. I was hours awake after we went to bed!"

This is what he gave her:—

A SONG IN THE NIGHT.

A brown bird sang on a blossomy tree,
Sang in the moonshine, merrily,
Three little songs, one, two, and three,
A song for his wife, for himself, and me.

He sang for his wife, sang low, sang high,
Filling the moonlight that filled the sky,
"Thee, thee, I love thee, heart alive!
Thee, thee, thee, and thy round eggs five!"

He sang to himself, "What shall I do
With this life that thrills me through and through!
Glad is so glad that it turns to ache!
Out with it, song, or my heart will break!"

He sang to me, "Man, do not fear
Though the moon goes down, and the dark is near;
Listen my song, and rest thine eyes;
Let the moon go down that the sun may rise!"

I folded me up in the heart of his tune,
And fell asleep in the sinking moon;
I woke with the day's first golden gleam,
And lo, I had dreamed a precious dream!

CHAPTER XXVI.

RICHARD AND ALICE.

One evening Richard went to see his grandfather, and asked if he would allow him to give Miss Wylder a lesson in horse-shoeing: she wanted, he said, to be able to shoe Miss Brown—or indeed any horse. Simon laughed heartily at the proposal: it was too great an absurdity to admit of serious objection!

"Ah, you don't know Miss Wylder, grandfather!" said Richard.

"Of course not! Never an old man knew anything about a girl! It's only the young fellows can fathom a woman! Having girls of his own blinds a man to the nature of them! There's going to be a law passed against growing old! It's an unfortunate habit the world's got into somehow, and the young fellows are going to put a stop to it for fear of losing their wisdom!"

As the blacksmith spoke, he went on rasping and filing at a housedoor-key, fast in a vice on his bench; and his words seemed to Richard to fall from his mouth like the raspings from his rasp.

"Well, grandfather," said Richard, "if Miss Wylder don't astonish you, she'll astonish me!"

"Have you ever seen her drive a nail, boy?"

"Not once; but I am just as sure she will do it—and better than any beginner you've seen yet!"

"Well, well, lad! we'll see! we'll see! She's wel-

come anyhow to come and have her try! What day shall it be?"

"That I can't tell yet."

"It makes me grin to think o' them doll's hands with a great hoof in them!"

"They *are* little hands—she's little herself—but they ain't doll's hands, grandfather. You should have seen her box Miss Vixen's ears for making a face at me! Her ears didn't take them for doll's hands, I'll be bound! The room rang again!"

"Bring her when you like, lad," said Simon.

It was moonlight, and when Richard arrived at the lodgeless gate, he saw inside it, a few yards away, seated on a stone, the form of a woman. He thought the first moment, as was natural, of Barbara, but the next, he knew that this was something strange. She sat in helpless, hopeless attitude, with her head in her hands. A strange dismay came upon him at the sight of her; his heart fluttered in a cage of fear. He did not believe in ghosts. If he saw one, it would but show that sometimes when a person died there was a shadow left that was like him! There might be millions of ghosts, and no God the more! What are we all but spectres of the unknown? What was death but a vanishing of the unknown? What are the dead but vanishments! Yet he shuddered at the thought that he had actually come upon one of the dead that are still alive, of whom, once or twice in a long century, one is met wandering vaguely about the world, unable to find what used to make it home. He peered through the iron bars as into a charnel-house: one such wanderer was enough to make the whole vault of night a gaping tomb.

Putting his key in the lock made a sharp little noise. The figure started up, her face gleaming white in the moon, but dropped again on her stone, unable to stand. Richard could not take his eyes off her. While closing the gate he dared not turn his back to her. She sat motionless as before, her head in her hands, her elbows on her knees. He stood for a moment staring and trembling, then, with an effort of the will that approached agony, went toward her. As he drew nearer, he began to feel as if he had once known her. He must have seen her in London somewhere, he thought. But why was her shadow sitting there, the lonely hostless guest of the night's caravansary?

He went nearer. The form remained motionless. Something reminded him of Alice Manson.

He laid his hand on the figure. It was a woman to the touch as well as to the eye. But not yet did she move an inch. He would have raised her face. Then she resisted. All at once he was sure she was Alice.

"Alice!" he cried. "Good God!—sitting in the cold night!"

She made him no answer, sat stone-still.

"What shall I do for you?" he said.

"Nothing," she answered, in a voice that might well have been that of a spectre. "Leave me," she added, as if with the last entreaty of despair.

"You are in trouble, Alice!" he persisted. "Why are you so far from home? Where's Arthur?"

"What right have you to question me?" she returned, almost fiercely.

"None but that I am your brother's friend."

"Friend!" she echoed, in a faint, far-away voice.

"You forget, Alice, that I did all I could to be your friend, and you would not let me!"

She neither spoke nor moved. Her stillness seemed to say, "Neither will I now."

"Where are you going?" he asked, after a hopeless pause.

"Nowhere."

"Why did you leave London?"

"Why should I tell you?"

"I think you will tell me!"

"I will not."

"You know I would do anything for you!"

"I daresay!"

"You know I would!"

"I don't."

"Try me."

"I will not."

Her voice grew more and more faint and forced. Her words and it were very unlike.

"Don't go on like that, Alice. You're not being reasonable," pleaded Richard.

"Oh, do leave me alone!"

"I won't leave you."

"As you please! It's nothing to me."

"Alice, why do you speak to me like that? Tell me what's wrong."

"Everything is wrong. Everybody is wrong. The whole world is wrong."

Her voice was a little stronger. She raised herself, and looked him in the face.

"I hope not."

"I hope it is!"

"Why should you?"

"To think things were right would be too terrible! I say everything's wrong."

"What's to be done, then?" sighed Richard.

"I must get out of it all."

"But how?"

"There is only one way."

"What is that?"

"Everybody knows."

"Alice," cried Richard, nearly in despair like herself, "are you out of your mind?"

"Pretty nearly.—Why shouldn't I be? There are plenty of us!"

"Alice, if you won't tell me what is the matter with you, if you won't let me help you, I will sit down by you till the morning."

"What if I drop?"

"Then I will carry you away. The sooner you drop the better."

Her resolution seemed to break.

"I ain't eaten a mouthful to-day," she said.

"My poor girl! Promise me to wait till I come back. Here, put on my coat."

She was past resisting more, and allowed him to button his coat about her.

But he was in great perplexity: where was he to get anything for her? And how was she to live till he brought it? It was terrible to think of! Alice with nothing to eat, and no refuge but a stone in the moonlight! This was what her religion had done for Alice!

"Miss Wylder's God!" he said to himself with contempt. "He's well enough for the wind and the stars and the moonlight! but for human beings—for

Alice—for creatures dying of hunger, what a mockery! If he were there, it would be a sickness to talk of him! Beauty is beauty, but for anything behind it—pooh!"

He stood a moment hesitating. Alice swayed on her seat, and would have fallen. He caught her—and in the act remembered a little cottage, a hut rather, down a lane a short way off. He took her in his arms and started for it.

She was dreadfully thin, but a strong man cannot walk very fast carrying a woman, however light she be, and she had half come to herself before he reached the cottage.

"Richard, dear Richard!" she murmured at his ear, "where are you carrying me? Are you going to kill me, or are you taking me home with you? Do set me down. Where's Arthur? I will let you be good to me! I will! I can't hold out forever!"

She seemed to be dreaming—apparently about their meeting in Regent-Street; or perhaps she was delirious from want of food. He walked on without attempting to answer her. Some great wrong had been done her, and his heart sank within him; for he believed in no judgment, no final setting right of wrongs. He knew of nothing better than that the wronged and the wronger would cease together. Certainly, if his creed represented fact, the best thing in existence is that it has no essential life in it, that it cannot continue, that it must cease: the good of living is that we must die. The hope of death is the inspiration of Buddhism! His heart ached with pity for the girl. His help, his tenderness expanded, and folded her in the wings of a shelter that was not empty because his creed was false.

"She belongs to me!" he said to himself. "The world has thrown her off: 'be it lawful I take up what's cast away!' Here is the one treasure, a human being! the best thing in the world! I will cherish it. Poor girl! she shall at least know one man a refuge!"

The cottage was a wretched place, but a laborer and his family lived in it. He knocked many times. A sleepy voice answered at last, and presently a sleepy-eyed man half opened the door.

"What's the deuce of a row?" he grunted.

"Here's a young woman half dead with hunger and cold!" said Richard. "You must take her in or she'll die!"

"Can't you take her somewhere else?"

"There's nowhere else near enough.—Come, come, let us in! You wouldn't have her die on your door-step!"

"I don'ow as I see the sense o' bringin' her here!" answered the man sleepily. "We ain't out o' the hunger-wood ourselves yet!—Wife! here's a chap as says he's picked up a young 'oman a dyin' o' 'unger!—'tain't likely, be it, i' this land o' liberty?"

"Likely enough, Giles, where the liberty's mainly to starve!" replied a feminine voice. "Let un bring the poor thing in. There ain't nowhere to put her, an' there ain't nothin' to give her, but she can't lie out in the wide world!"

"Ain't you got a drop o' milk?" asked Richard.

"Milk!" echoed the woman; "it's weeks an' weeks the childer ain't tasted of it! The wonder to me is that the cows let a poor man milk 'em!"

Richard set Alice on her feet, but she could not stand alone; had he taken his arm from round her,

she would have fallen in a heap. But the woman while she spoke had been getting a light, and now came to the door with a candle-end. Her husband kept prudently in her shadow.

"Poor thing! poor thing! she be far gone!" she said, when she saw her. "Bring her in, sir. There's a chair she can sit upon. I'll get her a drop o' tea—that'll be better'n milk! There's next to no work, and the squire he be mad wi' Giles acause o' some rabbit or other they says he snared—which they did say it was a hare—I don'ow: take the skin off, an' who's to tell t'one from t'other! I do know I was right glad on't for the childer! An' if the parson tell me my man 'ill be damned for hare or rabbit, an' the childer starvin', I'll give him a bit o' my mind. —'No, sir!" says I; 'God ain't none o' your sort!' says I, 'An' p'r'aps the day may be at hand when the rich an' the poor 'll have a turn o' a change together! Leastways there's somethin' like it somewheres i' the Bible,' says I. 'An if it be i' the Bible,' says I, 'it's likely to be true, for the Bible do take the part o' the rich—mostly!'"

She was a woman who liked to hear herself talk, and so spoke as one listening to herself. Like most people, whether they talk or not, she got her ideas second-hand; but Richard was nowise inclined to differ with what she said about the Bible, for he knew little more and no better about it than she. Had parson Wingfold, who did know the Bible as few parsons know it, heard her, he would have told her that, by search express and minute, he had satisfied himself that there was not a word in the Bible against the poor, although a multitude of words against the rich. The sins of the poor are not once

mentioned in the Bible, the sins of the rich very often. The rich may think this hard, but I state the fact, and do not much care what they think. When they come to judge themselves and others fairly they will understand that God is no respecter of persons, not favoring even the poor in his cause.

Richard set Alice on the one chair, by the poor little fire the woman was coaxing to heat the water she had put on it in a saucepan. Alice stared at the fire, but hardly seemed to see it. The woman tried to comfort her. Richard looked round the place: the man was in the bed that filled one corner; a mattress in another was crowded with children; there was no spot where she could lie down.

"I shall be back as soon's ever I can," he said, and left the cottage.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SISTER.

He hurried back over the bare, moon-white road. He had seen Miss Wylder come that morning, and hoped to reach the house, which was not very far off, before she should have gone to bed. Of her alone in that house did he feel he could ask the help he needed. If she had gone home, he would try the gardener's wife! But he wanted a woman with wit as well as will. He would help himself from the larder if he could not do better—but there would be no brandy there!

Many were the thoughts that, as now he walked, now ran, passed swiftly through his mind. It was strange, he said to himself, that this girl, of whom he had seen so little, yet in whom he felt so great an interest, should reappear in such dire necessity! When last he saw her, she hurt herself in frantic escape from him; now she could not escape!

Whence she had come or how it had happened that she should appear thus at Mortgrange Richard could not imagine. But with him, as with all truly unselfish natures, thought was action. Alice needed aid and attention and these he would procure for her be the risk what it might. It was not in him to question when suffering appealed for relief or sorrow for sympathy. Time might clear the mystery of her coming or it might not; enough for him that the girl was now

in his care. He would help her unquestioning, and trust to the future for explanations.

"And this is the world," he went on, "that the priests would have you believe ruled by the providence of an all powerful and all good being! *My* heart is sore for the girl—a good girl, if ever there was one, so that I would give—yes, I think I would give my life for her! I certainly would, rather than see her in misery! Of course I would! Any man would, worth calling a man! When it came to the point, I should not think twice about it! And there is *he*, sitting up there in his glory, and looking down unmoved upon her wretchedness! I will *not* believe in any such God!"

Of course he was more than right in refusing to believe in such a God! Were such a being possible, he would not be God. If there were such a being and all powerful, he would be *the* one *not* to be worshipped. But was Richard, therefore, to believe in no God altogether different? May a God only be such as is not to be believed in? Is it not rather that, to be God, the being must be so good that a man is hardly to be found able—must I say also, or willing—to believe in him? Perhaps, if he had been as anxious to do his duty all over, out and out, as he was where his feelings pointed to it, Richard might have had a "What if" or two to propose to himself. Might he not for instance have said, "What if a certain being should even now be putting in my way the honor and gladness of helping this woman—making me his messenger to her?" What if his soul was too impatient to listen for the next tick of the clock of eternity, and was left therefore to declare there was no such clock going! Ought he not even now to

have been capable of thinking that there might be a being with a design for his creatures yet better than *merely* to make them happy? What if, that gained, the other must follow! Here was a man judging the eternal, who did not even know his own name!

As he drew near the house, the question arose in his mind: if Miss Wylder was gone to her room, what was he to do to find her? He did not know where her room was! He knew that, when she went up the stair, at the top of it she turned to the right—and he knew no more.

The side-gate at the lodge was yet open; so was the great door of the house. He entered softly, and going along a wide passage, arrived at the foot of the great staircase, which ascended with the wide sweep of half an oval, just in time to see at the top the reflection of a candle disappearing to the right. There were many chances against its being Barbara's, but with an almost despairing recklessness he darted up, and turning, saw again the reflection of the candle from the wall of a passage that crossed the corridor. He followed as swiftly and lightly as he could, and at the corner all but overturned an elderly maid, whose fright gave place to wrath when she saw who had endangered her.

"I want to see Miss Wylder!" said Richard hurriedly.

"You have no call to be in this part of the house," returned the woman.

"I can't stop to explain," answered Richard. "Please tell me which is her room."

"Indeed I will not."

"When she knows my business, she will be glad I came to her."

"You may find it for yourself."

"Will you take a message for me then?"

"I am not Miss Wylder's maid!" she replied. "Neither is it my place to wait on my fellow-servants."

She turned away, tossing her head, and rounded the corner into the corridor.

Richard looked down the passage. A light was burning at the other end of it, and he saw there were not many doors in it. With a sudden resolve to go straight ahead, he called out clear and plain:—

"Miss Wylder!" and again, "Miss Wylder!"

A door opened and, to his delight, out peeped Barbara's dainty little head. She saw Richard, gave one glance in the opposite direction, and made him a sign to come to her. He did so. She was in her dressing-gown: it was not her candle he had followed, but its light had led him to her!

"What is it?" she said hurriedly. "Don't speak loud: Lady Ann might hear you!"

"There's a girl all but dying——" began Richard.

"Go to the library," she said. "I will come to you there. I sha'n't be a minute!"

She went in, and her door closed with scarce a sound. Then first a kind of scare fell upon Richard: one of those doors might open, and the pale, cold face of the formidable lady look out Gorgon-like! If it was her candle he had followed, she could hardly have put it down when he called Miss Wylder! He ran gliding through passage and corridor, and down the stair, noiseless and swift as a bat. Arrived in the library, he lighted a candle, and, lest any one should enter, pretended to be looking out books. Within five minutes Barbara was at his side.

"Now!" she said, and stood silent, waiting.

There was a solemn look on her face, and none of the smile with which she usually greeted him. Their last interview had made her miserable for a while, and more solemn forever. For hours the world was black about her, and she felt as if Richard had struck her. To say there was no God behind the loveliness of things, was to say there was no loveliness—nothing but a pretence of loveliness! The world was a painted thing! a toy for a doll! a phantasm!

He told her where and in what state he had found the girl, and to what a poor place he had been compelled to carry her, saying he feared she would die before he could get anything for her, except Miss Wylder would help him.

"Brandy!" she said, thinking. "Lady Ann has some in her room. The rest I can manage!—Wait here; I will be with you in three minutes."

She went, and Richard waited—without anxiety, for whatever Barbara undertook seemed to those who knew her as good as done.

She reappeared in her red cloak, with a basket beneath it. Richard, wondering, would have taken the basket from her.

"Wait till we are out of the house," she said. "Open that bay window, and mind you don't make a noise. They mustn't find it undone: we have to get in that way again."

Richard obeyed scrupulously. It was a French window, and issue was easy.

"What if they close the shutters?" he ventured to say.

"They don't always. We must take our chance," she replied.

He thought she must mean to go as far as the lodge only.

"You won't forget, miss, to fasten the window again?" he whispered, as he closed it softly behind them.

"We must always risk something!" she answered. "Come along!"

"Please give me the basket," said Richard.

She gave it him; and the next moment he found her leading to the way through the park toward the lodgeless gate.

They had walked a good many minutes, and Barbara had not said a word.

"How good of you, miss, to come!" ventured Richard.

"To come!" she returned. "What else did you expect? Did you not want me to come?"

"I never thought of your coming! I only thought you would get the right things for me—if you could!"

"You don't think I would leave the poor girl to the mercy of a man who would tell her there was nobody anywhere to help her out of her troubles!"

"I don't think I should have told her that; I might have told her there was nobody to bring worse trouble upon her!"

"What comfort would that be, when the trouble was come—and as strong as she could bear!"

Richard was silent a moment, then in pure self-defence answered:—

"A man must neither take nor give the comfort of a lie!"

"Tell me honestly, then," said Barbara, "—for I do believe you are an honest man—tell me, are you *sure* there is no God? Have you gone all through the universe looking for him, and failed to find him? Is there no possible chance that there may be a God!"

"I do not believe there is."

"But are you sure there is not? Do you know it, so that you have a right to say it?"

Richard hesitated.

"I cannot say," he answered, "that I know it as I know a proposition in Euclid, or as I know that I must not do what is wrong."

"Then what right have you to go and make people miserable by saying there is no God—as if you, being an honest man, knew it, and would not say it if you did not know it? You take away the only comfort left the unhappy! Of course you have a right to say you don't believe it—but only that! and I would think twice before I said even that, where all the certainty was that it would make people miserable!"

"I don't know anybody it would make miserable," said Richard.

"It would make me dead miserable," returned Barbara.

"I know many it would redeem from misery," rejoined Richard. "To believe in a cruel being ready to pounce upon them is enough to make the strongest miserable."

"The cruel being that made the world, you mean?"

"Yes—if the world was made."

"If one believes in any God, it must be the same God that made this lovely night—and the gladness it would give me, if you did not take it from me!"

Richard was silent for a moment.

"How can I take it from you?" he said, "if you think what I say is not true?"

"You make me fear lest it should be true; and then farewell to all joy in life—not only for want of some one to love right heartily, but because there is no refuge from the evils that are all about us. I have no quarrel with you if you say these evils are brought upon us by an evil being, who lives to make men miserable; there you leave room to believe also in one fighting against him, to whom we can go for help! The God our parson believes in he calls 'God, our saviour.' To take away the notion of any kind of God, is to make life too dreary to live!"

"Yours is the old doctrine of the Magians," remarked Richard.

"Well?"

"I could accept it easily beside what people believe now."

"What do they believe?"

"They believe in the God of the Bible, who makes pets of a few of his creatures, and sends all the rest into eternal torment. Would you comfort people with the good news of a God like that?"

"Such a God is not to be believed in! Deny him all you can. But because there cannot be an evil God, what right have you to say there cannot be a good one? That is to reason backward! The very notion of a night like this having no meaning in it—no God in it who intends it to look just so, is enough to make *me* miserable. But I will *not* believe it! I shall hate you if you make me believe it!"

"The Bible says there is an evil being behind it!"

"I don't know much about the Bible, but I don't believe it says that."

"Of course it *calls* him good, but it says he does certain things which we know to be bad."

"You make too much of the Bible, if it says such things. Throw it out of the window and have done with it. But how dare you tell me there is nobody greater than me to account for me! You make of me a creature that was not worth being made; a mere ooze from nothing, like the scum on the pond there, because it cannot help it. If I have no God to be my justification, my being becomes loathsome to me. I don't know how I came to be, where I came from, or where I am going to; and you say there *can* be nobody that knows; you tell me there is no help; that I must die in the dark I came out of; that there is no love about me knowing what it loves. Even if I found myself alive and awake and happy after I was dead, what comfort would there be if there was no God? How should I ever grow better?—how get rid of the wrong things in myself?—If life has no better thing for this poor woman, be kind and let her die and have done with it. Why keep her in such a hopeless existence as you believe in? You can have but little regard for her surely! I beg of you don't say *that thing* to her, for you don't *know* it."

Richard was again silent for a while; then he said—

"I had no intention of saying anything of the sort, but I promise because you wish it."

"Thank you! thank you!"

"I promise too," added Richard, "that I will not say anything more of that kind until I have thought a good deal more about it."

"Thank you again heartily!" said Barbara. "I am sure of one thing—that you cannot have ground for not hoping! Is not hope all we have got? He

is the very butcher of humanity who kills its hope! It is hope we live by!"

"But if it be a false hope?"

"A false hope cannot do so much harm as a false fear!"

"The false fear is just what I oppose. The Bible tells people——"

"There you are back to the book you don't believe in! And because you don't believe in the book that makes people afraid, you insist there can be no such thing as the gladness my heart cries out for! If you want to make people happy, why don't you preach a good God instead of no God?"

"I will think about what you say," replied Richard.

"Mind," said Barbara, "I don't pretend to know anything! I only say I have a right to hope. And for the Bible, I must have a better look at it! A man who, being, a good man, wants to comfort us poor women, whom men knock about so, by taking from us the idea of a living God that cares for us, cannot be so wise but that he may be wrong about a book! Have you read it all through now, Mr. Tuke—so that you are sure it says what you say it says?"

"I have not," answered Richard; "but everybody knows what it says!"

"Well, I don't! Nobody has taken the trouble to tell me, and I haven't read it.—But I'll just give you a little bit of my life to look at. I was with my father and mother for a while in Sydney, and there a terrible lie was told about me, and everybody believed it, and nobody would speak to me. Somehow people are always ready to believe lies—even people who would not tell lies! We had to leave Sydney in consequence, and to this day everybody

in Sydney believes me a wicked, ugly girl!—Now I know I am not! See—I can hold my face to the stars! It was trying to help a poor creature that nobody would do anything for that got the lie said of me. I thought my first business was to take care of my neighbor, and I did it, and that's what came of it!"

"And you believe in a God that would let that come to you for doing what was good?" said Richard, with an indignation that exploded in all directions.

"Stop! stop! the thing's not over yet! The world is not done with yet! What if there be a God who loves me, and cares as little what people say about me, because he knows the truth, as I care about it because *I* know the truth!—But that is not what I wanted to say; this is it: if such lies were told, and believed, about an innocent girl trying to do her duty, why may not people have told lies about God, and other people believed them? The same thing may hold with the book. Perhaps it does not speak such lies about God, but stupid or lying people have said that it speaks them, and other people have believed those, and said it again. I hope with all my heart you are saying what is false when you say there is no God; but that is not nearly so bad as saying there is a God who is not good. I can't think anybody believing in a God like that, would have been able to write a book about him that so many good people care to read."

Richard was thoroughly silenced now. I do not mean that he was at all convinced, but how could he find much to say with that appeal of Barbara to her own sore experience echoing in his heart! And they were just at the door of the cottage. He

knocked, and receiving no answer, opened the door, and they went in.

There was light enough from the glow of a mere remnant of fire in a corner, to see, on a stool by its side, the good woman of the house fast asleep, with her head against the wall. Her husband was snoring in bed. The children lay still as death on their mattress upon the floor. Alice sat on the one chair, her head fallen back, and her face as white as human face could be; but when they listened, they could hear her breathing. Beside the pale, worn, vanishing girl, Barbara looked the incarnation of concentrated life and energy. Her cheeks were flushed with the rapid walk, and her eyes were still flashing with the thoughts that had been rising in her, and the words that had been going from her. For a moment she stood radiant with the tender glow of an infinite pity, as she looked down on the death-like girl; then, with a sigh in which trembled the very luxury of service, she put her arm under the poor back-fallen head, and lifted it gently up. With the motion, Alice's eyes opened, like those of certain wonderful dolls, but they did not seem to have so much life in them.

"Quick!" said Barbara; "give me a little brandy in the cup."

Richard made haste, and Barbara put the cup to Alice's lips.

"Dear, take a little brandy; it will revive you," she said.

Alice came to her windows and looked, and saw the face of an angel bending over her. She obeyed the heavenly vision, and drank what it offered. It made her cough, and their hostess started to her feet

as if dreading censure; but a smile and a greeting from Barbara reassured her. She thanked her for her hospitality as if Alice had been her sister, and slipping money into her hand, coaxingly begged her to make up the fire a little, that she might warm some soup.

Almost at once upon her tasting the soup, a little color began to come in Alice's cheek. Barbara was feeding her, and a feeble smile flickered over the thin face every time it looked up in Barbara's. Richard stood gazing, and saw that hope in God could not much have lessened one woman's tenderness. He had scarcely seen tenderness in his mother; and certainly he had seen little hope. She was thoroughly kind to him, and he knew she would have died for her husband; but he had seen no sweetness in their intercourse, neither could remember any sweetness to himself. The hot spring of his aunt's love to him was no geyser, and he never knew in this world how hot it was. Hence was it to Richard more than a gracious sight, it was a revelation to him, as he watched the electric play of the love that passed from the strong, tender, child-like girl to the delicate, weary, starved creature to whom she was ministering.

At length Barbara thought it better she should have no more food for the present, when naturally the question arose, what was to be done next. The saviours went out into the night to have a free talk, and a little fresh air—sorely wanted in the cottage.

Richard then told Barbara that, if she did not disapprove, he would take Alice to his grandfather; he was certain he would receive her cordially, and both he and Jessie would do what they could for her. But he did not know of any vehicle he could get to carry

her, except his grandfather's pony-cart, and that was four miles away!

"All right!" said Barbara "I will stay with her, in and out, till you come."

"But how will you get home after?"

"As I came, of course. Don't trouble yourself about me; I can look after myself."

"But if they should have fastened the library window?"

"Then I will do the next simplest thing. I will pull the bell and go in through the door."

"And then they will know of your coming out," said Richard, greatly disturbed at the thought of the possible unpleasantness his hasty action had brought.

"That is my affair," Barbara replied, "and gives me no concern. Yours is to be off to your grandfather's as speedily as you can. Don't you think about me. I shall come to no harm. Go at once and fetch the pony-cart."

Richard set off running, and came to his grandfather's while it was yet unreviving night; but he had little difficulty in rousing the old man. He told him all he knew about Alice, as well as the plight in which he had found her. Simon looked grave when he heard how his daughter had come between Richard and his friends. He hurried on his clothes, put the pony to, and go into the cart: he would himself fetch the girl! In another moment they were spinning along the gray road.

When they reached the hut, there was Barbara standing sentry near the door. She went and talked to Simon. Richard got down and went in. He found Alice wide awake, staring into the fire, with a look that brought a great rush of pity into his heart

afresh. Remembering how the girl had shrunk from him before, he feared himself unfit to help, and knew himself unable to comfort her. For the first time he vaguely felt that there might be troubles needing a hand which neither man nor woman could hold out. Their kind hostess had crept into bed beside her husband, and was snoring as loud as he. Without a word he wrapped Alice in the blanket he had brought, and taking her once more in his arms, carried her to the cart. Leaning down from his perch, the sturdy old man received her in his, placed her comfortably beside him, put his arm round her, and with a nod to Barbara, and never a word to his grandson, drove away. Richard knew his rugged goodness too well to mind how he treated him, and was confident in him for Alice, as one to do not less but more than he promised. He was thus free to walk home with Barbara, glad at heart to know Alice in harbor, but a little anxious until Miss Wylder should be safe shut in her chamber.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BARBARA AND LADY ANN.

As they went, neither said much. Both seemed to avoid the subject of their conversation as they came. They talked of poetry and fiction, and did not differ. Though Barbara there also had precious insights, happily she had no opinions.

When they reached a certain point, Richard drew back, and, from a coign of vantage, saw Barbara try the study-window and fail. He then followed her as she went round to the door, and, still covertly, saw her ring the bell. The door was opened with what seemed to him a portentous celerity, and she disappeared. He turned away into the park, and wandered about, revolving many things, till by slow gradations the sky's gray idea unfolded to a brilliant conviction, and, lo, there was the morning, not to be controverted! But he took care to let the house not only come awake, but come to its senses, before he sought admission. When it seemed well astir, he rang the bell; and when the door, after some delay, was opened, he went straight to the library, and was fairly at work by five o'clock.

He saw nothing of Barbara all day, or indeed of any of the family except Vixen, who looked in, made a face at him, and went away, leaving the door open. At eight o'clock he had his breakfast, and at nine he was again in the library; so that by lunch-time he

had been seven of his eight hours at work, and by half-past two found himself free to go to his grandfather's and inquire after Alice.

On his way to the road through the park, he met Arthur Lestrange. Richard touched his hat as was his wont, and would have passed, but, with no friendly expression on his countenance, Arthur stopped.

"Where are you going, Tuke?" he said.

"I am going to my grandfather's, sir," answered Richard.

"Excuse me, but your day's work is not over by many hours yet."

Richard found his temper growing troublesome, but tried hard to keep it in hand.

"If you remember, sir," he said, "our agreement mentioned no hour for beginning or leaving off work."

"That is true, but you undertook to give me eight hours of your day!"

"Yes, sir. I was at work by five o'clock this morning, and have given you more than eight hours."

"Hm!" said Arthur.

"I am quite as anxious," pursued Richard, "to fulfil my engagement, as you can be to have it fulfilled."

Arthur said nothing.

"Ask Thomas, who let me in this morning," resumed Richard, "whether I was not at work in the library by five o'clock."

It went a good deal against the grain with Richard to appeal to any witness for corroboration: he was proud of being a man of his word; but although not greatly anxious to keep his temporary position, he

was anxious the compact should not be broken through anything he did or said.

"Let you in?" exclaimed Arthur; "—let you in before five o'clock in the morning? Then you were out all night!"

"I was."

"That cannot be permitted."

"I am surely right in believing that, when my work is over, I am my own master! I had something to do that must be done. My grandfather knows all I was about!"

"Oh, yes, I remember! old Simon Armour, the blacksmith!" returned Arthur. "But," he went on, plainly softening a little, "you ought not to work for him while you are in my employment."

"I know that, sir; and if I wanted, my grandfather would not let me. While my work is yours, it is all yours, sir."

With that he turned, and left Arthur where he stood a little relieved, though now annoyed as well that a man in his employment should not have waited to be dismissed. Hastening to the smithy, he found his grandfather putting off his apron to go home for a cup of tea.

"Oh, there you are!" he said. "I thought we should be catching sight of you before long!"

"How's Alice, grandfather? You might be sure I should want to know!"

"She's been asleep all day, the best thing for her!"

"I hope, grandfather," said Richard, for Simon's tone troubled him a little, "you are not vexed with me! I assure you I had nothing to do with her coming down here—that I know of. You would

not have had me leave her sitting there, out on that stone in the moonlight, all night long, a ghost before her time without a grave to go to? She would have been dead before the morning! She must have been! I am certain *you* would not have left her there!"

"God forbid, lad! If you thought me out of temper with you, it was a mistake. I confess the thing does bother me, but I'm not blaming *you*. You acted like a Christian."

Richard hardly relished the mode of his grandfather's approbation. A man ought to do the right thing because he was a man, not because he was something else than a man! He had yet to learn that a man and a Christian are precisely and entirely the same thing; that a being who is not a Christian is not a man. I perfectly know how absurd this must seem to many, but such do not see what I see. No one, however strong he may feel his obligations, will ever be man enough to fulfil them except he be a Christian—that is, one who, like Christ, cares first for the will of the Father. One who thinks he can meet his obligations now, can have no idea what is required of him in virtue of his being what he is—no idea of what his own nature requires of him. So much is required that nothing more could be required. Let him ask himself whether he is doing what he requires of himself. If he answer, "I can do it without Christianity anyway," I reply, "Do it; try to do it, and I know where the honest endeavor will bring you. Don't try to do it, and you are not man enough to be worth reasoning with."

Simon and his grandson had not yet turned the

corner, when Richard heard a snort he knew: there, sure enough, stood Miss Brown, hitched to the garden-paling, peaceable but impatient.

"Miss Wylder here!" said Richard.

"Yes, lad! She's been here an hour and more. Jessie came and told me, but I knew it: I heard the mare, and knew the sound of my own shoes on her!—I doubt if she'll stand it much longer though!" he added, as she pawed the road. "Well, she's a fine creature!"

"Yes, she's a good mare!"

"I don't mean the mare! I mean the mistress!"

"Miss Wylder is just noble!" said Richard. "But I'm afraid she got into trouble last night!"

"It don't sound much like it!" returned the old man, as Barbara's musical, bird-like laugh came from the cottage. "She ain't breaking her heart!—Alice, as you call her, must be doing well, or missie wouldn't be laughing like that!"

As they entered, Barbara came gliding down the perpendicular stair in front of them, her face yet radiant with the shadow of the laugh they had heard.

"Good-morning, Mr. Armour!" she said. "—I did not expect to see you so soon again, Mr. Tuke. Will you put me up?"

Richard released Miss Brown, got her into position, and gave his hand to Barbara's foot, as he had seen Mr. Lestrange do. But lifting, he nearly threw her over Miss Brown's back. She burst into her lovely laugh, clutched at a pommel, and held fast.

"I'm not quite ready to go to heaven all at once!" she said.

"I thought you were!" answered Richard. "But

indeed I beg your pardon! I might have known how light you must be!"

"I am very heavy for my size!"

"May I walk a little way alongside of you, miss?"

"You have a right; I have offered you my company more than once," answered Barbara.

They walked a little way in silence. Then the very accident of association impelled their thoughts into the old channel, and Richard broke out almost impetuously.

"Why is there no way to the heaven you believe in, but the terrible gate of death?" he demanded. "If a God of love, as you say your God is, made the world, and could not—for want of room, I suppose—let his creatures live on in it, he would surely have thought of some better way out of it than such a ghastly one!"

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Barbara was her readiness. Very seldom had one to wait for her answer.

"This morning," she said, "for the first time with me on her back at least, Miss Brown refused a jump—and I grant the place *looked* ugly! But I gave her a little sharp persuasion, and she took it beautifully, coming away as proud of herself as possible.—If there be a God, he must know as much better than you and I, as I know better than Miss Brown. One who never did anything we couldn't understand, couldn't be God. How else could he make things?"

"Yes, if they are made!"

"If I were you, I would be quite sure first, before I said they were not. You won't assert anything

you are not sure of; don't deny anything either. Good-bye.—Go on, Miss Brown!"

She was more peremptory than usual, but he liked it—rather. He felt she had some right to speak to him so: positive as he had hitherto been, he was not really sure of anything!

The fact was, Barbara had been irritated that morning, and had got over the irritation, but not quite over the excitement of it. She thought Miss Brown should never again set hoof within the gates of Mortgrange.

After breakfast, Lady Ann had sent for her to her dressing-room, and Barbara had gone, prepared to hear of something to her disadvantage.

The same woman who had been so uncivil to Richard, had watched and seen them go out together. She fastened the library window behind them, and went and told Lady Ann, who requested her to mind her own business.

When Barbara rang the bell, not caring much—for a night in the park was of little consequence to her—the door was immediately opened, but only a little way, by some one without a light, whose face or even person she could not distinguish, for the door was quite in shadow. It closed again, and she was left darkling, to find her way to her room as best she might. She stood for a moment.

"Who is it?" she said.

No one answered. She heard neither footstep nor sound of garments. Carefully feeling her way, she got to the foot of the great stair, and in another minute was in her room.

When Barbara entered Lady Ann's dressing-room, she greeted her with less than her usual frigidity.

"Good-morning, my love! You were late last night!" she said.

"I thought I was rather early," answered Barbara, laughing.

"May I ask where you were?" said her ladyship, with her habitual composure.

"About a mile and a half from here, at that little cottage in Burrow-lane."

"How did you come to be there—and for so long? You were hours away!"

Even Lady Ann could not prevent a little surprise in her tone as she said the words.

"Mr. Tuke came and told me——"

"I beg your pardon, but do I know Mr. Tuke?"

"The bookbinder, at work in the library."

"Wouldn't your mother be rather astonished at your having secrets with a working-man?"

"Secrets, Lady Ann!" exclaimed Barbara. "Your ladyship forgets herself!"

Lady Ann looked up with a languid stare in the fresh young face, rosy with anger.

"Was I not in the act," pursued the girl, "of telling you all about it? You dare accuse me of such a thing! I only wish you would carry that tale of me to my mother!"

"I am not accustomed to be addressed in this style, Barbara!" drawled Lady Ann, without either raising or quickening her voice.

"Then it is time you began, if you are accustomed to speak to girls as you have just spoken to me! I am not accustomed to be told that I have a secret with any man—or woman either! I don't know which I should like worse! I have no secrets. I hate them."

"Compose yourself, my child. You need not be afraid of *me!*" said Lady Ann. "I am not your enemy."

She thought Barbara's anger came from fear, for she regarded herself as a formidable person. But for victory she rested mainly on her imperturbability.

"Look me in the face, Lady Ann, and tell yourself whether I am afraid of you!" answered Barbara, the very soul of indignation flashing in her eyes. "I fear no enemy."

Lady Ann found she had a new sort of creature to deal with.

"That I am your friend, you will not doubt when I tell you that it was I who let you in last night! I did not wish your absence or the hour of your return to be known. My visitors must not be remarked upon by my servants!"

"Then why did you not speak to me?"

"I wished to give you a lesson."

"You thought to frighten *me*, as if I were a doughy, half-baked English girl! Allow me to ask how you were aware I was out."

Lady Ann was not ready with her answer. She wanted to establish a protective claim on the girl—to have a secret with, and so a hold upon her.

"If the servants do not know," Barbara went on, "would you mind saying how your ladyship came to know? Have the servants up, and I will tell the whole thing before them all—and prove what I say too."

"Calm yourself, Miss Wylder. You will scarcely do yourself justice in English society, if you give way to such temper. As you wish the whole house

to know what you were about, pray begin with me, and explain the thing to me."

"Mr. Tuke told me he had found a young woman almost dead with hunger and cold by the wayside, and carried her to a cottage. I came to you, as you well remember, and begged a little brandy. Then I went to the larder, and got some soup. She would certainly have been dead before the morning, if we had not taken them to her."

"Why did you not tell me what you wanted the brandy for?"

"Because you would have tried to prevent me from going."

"Of course I should have had the poor creature attended to!—I confess I should have sent a more suitable person."

"I thought myself the most suitable person in the house."

"Why?"

"Because the thing came to me to get done, and I had to go; and because I knew I should be kinder to her than any one you could send. I know too well what servants are, to trust them with the poor!"

"You may be far too kind to such people!"

"Yes, if one hasn't common sense. But this girl you couldn't be too kind to."

"It is just as I feared: she has taken you in quite! Those tramps are all the same!"

"The same as other people—yes; that is, as different from each other as your ladyship and I."

Lady Ann found Barbara too much for her, and changed her attack.

"But how came you to be so long? As you have

just said, Burrow-lane can't be more than a mile and a half from here!"

"We could not leave her at the cottage; it was not a fit place for her. Mr. Tuke had to go to his grandfather's—four miles—and I had to stay with her till he came back. Old Simon came himself in his spring-cart, and took her away."

"Was there no woman at the cottage?"

"Yes, but worn out with work and children. Her night's rest was of more consequence to her than ten nights' waking would be to me."

"Thank you, Barbara! I was certain I should not prove mistaken in you! But I hope such a necessity will not often occur."

"I hope not; but when it does, I hope I may be at hand."

"I was certain it was some mission of mercy that had led you into the danger. A girl in your position must beware of being peculiar, even in goodness. There are more important things in the world than a little suffering!"

"Yes; your duty to your neighbor is more important."

"Not than your duty to yourself, Barbara!" said Lady Ann, in such a gentle severe tone of righteous reproof, that Barbara's furnace of a heart made the little pot that held her temper nearly boil over.

"Lady Ann," she said, unconsciously drawing herself up to her full little height, "I am sorry I gave you the trouble of sitting up to open the door for me. *That* at least shall not happen again. Good-morning."

"There is nothing to be annoyed at, Barbara. I

am quite pleased with what you have told me. I say only it was unwise of you not to let me know."

"It may not have been wise for my own sake, but it was for the woman's."

"There is no occasion to say more about the woman; I am quite satisfied with you, Barbara!" said Lady Ann, looking up with an icy smile, her last Parthian arrow.

"But I am not satisfied with you, Lady Ann," rejoined Barbara. "I have submitted to be catechised because the thing took place while I was your guest; but if such a thing were to happen again, I should do just the same; therefore I have no right, understanding perfectly how much it would displease you, to remain your guest. I ought, perhaps, to have gone home instead of returning to you, but I thought that would be uncivil, and look as if I were ashamed. My mother would never have treated me as you have done! You may think her a strange woman, but her heart is as big as her head—much bigger when it is full!"

It was not right of Barbara to get so angry, and answer Lady Ann so petulantly, for she knew her pretty well by this time, and yet was often her guest. That it was impossible for such a girl to feel respect for such a woman, if it accounts for her bearing to her, condemns the familiarity that gave occasion to that bearing. At the same time, but for Lady Ann's superiority in age, Barbara would have spoken her mind with yet greater freedom. Her rank made no halo about her in Barbara's eyes.

Lady Ann took no more trouble to appease her: the foolish girl would, she judged, be ashamed of herself soon, and accept the favor she knew to be un-

deserved! Lady Ann understood Barbara no more than Lady Ann understood the real woman underlying Lady Ann. She was not afraid of losing Barbara, for she believed her parents could not but be strongly in favor of an alliance with her family. She knew nothing of the personal opposition between Mr. and Mrs. Wylder; she never opposed Sir Wilton except it was worth her while to do so; and Sir Wilton never opposed her at all—openly. It gave Lady Ann no more pleasure to go against her husband, than to comply with his wishes; and she had anything but an adequate notion of the pleasure it gave Sir Wilton to see any desire of hers frustrated.

Barbara went to the stable, where man and boy had always his service in his right hand ready for her—got Miss Brown saddled, and was away from Mortgrange before Richard, early as he had begun, was half-way through his morning's work.

She went to see Alice almost every day from that afternoon; and as no one could resist Barbara, Alice's reserve, buttressed and bastioned as it was with pain, soon began to yield before the live sympathy that assailed it. They became fast friends.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ALICE AND BARBARA.

It was weeks before Alice was able to leave her bed: she had been utterly exhausted.

On a lovely summer morning she woke to a sense of returning health. She had been lying like a waste shore, at low springtide, covered with dry seaweeds, withered jelly-fishes, and a multitudinous life that gasped for the ocean: at last, at last, the cool washing throb of the great sea of bliss, whose fountain is the heart of God, had stolen upon her consciousness, and she knew that she lived. She lay in a neat little curtained bed, in a room with a sloping roof on both sides, covered, not with tiles or slates, but with warm thatch, thick and sound. Ivy was creeping through the chinks of the ill-fitting window-frame; but through the little dormer window itself the sun shone freely, and made shadows of shivering ivy-leaves upon the deal floor. It was a very humble room, and Alice had been used to much better furniture—but neither to room nor furniture so clean. There was a wholesomeness and purity everywhere about her very welcome to the lady-eyes with which Alice was born; for it is God that makes ladies, not stupid society and its mawkish distinctions. One brief moment she felt as if she had gained the haven of her rest, for she lay at peace, and nothing gnawed. But suddenly a pang shot through her heart, and she knew that some

harassing thought was at hand : pain was her portion, and had but to define itself to grow sharp. She rose on her elbow to receive the enemy. He came; she fell back with a fainting heart and a writhing will. She had left love and misery behind her to seek help, and she had not found it! she had but lost sight of those for whom she sought the help! She could not tell how long it was since she had seen her mother and Arthur : she lay covered with kindness by people she had never before seen ; and how they were faring, she could but conjecture, and conjecture had in it no comfort!

Alice had little education beyond what life had given her ; but life is the truest of all teachers, however little the results of her teaching may be valued by school-enthusiasts. She did not put the letter H in its place except occasionally, but she knew how to send a selfish thought back to its place. She did not know one creed from another, but she loved what she saw to be good. She knew nothing of the Norman conquest, but she knew much of self-conquest. She could make her breakfast off dry bread, that her mother might have hot coffee and the best of butter. She wore very shabby frocks, but she would not put bad work into the seams of a rich lady's dress. She stooped as she walked, and there was a lack of accord between her big beautiful eyes and the way she put her feet down ; but it was the same thing that made her eyes so large, and her feet so heavy ; and if she could not trip lightly along the street, she could lay very tender hands on her mother's head when it ached with drinking. She had suffered much at the hands of great ladies, yet she had but to see Barbara to love her.

As she lay with her heart warming in that sunshine in which every heart must one day flash like the truest of diamonds, she heard the sound of a horse's hoofs on the road. Her angel came to Alice with no flapping of great wings, or lighting of soft-poised heavenly feet on wooden floor, but with the sounds of ringing iron shoes and snorting breath, to be followed by a girl's feet on the stair, whose herald was the smell, now of rosiest roses, now of whitest lilies, in the chamber of her sad sister. Well might Alice have sung, "How beautiful are the feet!" At the music of those mounting feet, death and fear slunk from the room, and Alice knew there was salvation in the world. What evil *can* there be for which there is *no* help in another honest human soul! What sorrow is there from which a man may not be some covert, some shadow! Alas for the true soul which cannot itself save, when it has no notion where help is to be found!

"Well, how are you to-day, little one?" said Barbara, sitting down on the edge of the bed.

Alice was older and taller than Barbara, but Barbara never thought about height or age: strong herself, she took the maternal relation to all weakness.

"Ever so much better, miss!" answered Alice.

"Now, none of that!" returned the little lady, "or I walk out of the room! My name is Barbara, and we are friends—except you think it cheeky of me to call you Alice!"

Alice stretched out her thin arms, folded them gently around Barbara, and burst into weeping, which was not all bitter.

"Will you let me tell you everything?" she cried.

"What am I here for?" returned Barbara, deep in

her embrace. "Only don't think I'm asking you to tell me anything. Tell me whatever you like—whatever will help me to know you—not a thing more."

Alice lay silent for an instant, then said—

"I wish you would ask me some question! I don't know how to begin!"

Without a moment's hesitation, Barbara said in response—

"What do you do all day in London?"

"Sew, sew, sit and sew, from morning to night," answered Alice. "No sooner one thing out of your hands, than another in them, so that you never feel, for all you do, that you've done anything! The world is just as greedy of your work as before. I sometimes wish," she went on, with a laugh that had a touch of real merriment in it, "that ladies were made with hair like a cat, I am so tired of the everlasting bodice and skirt!—Only what would become of us then! It would only be more hunger for less weariness!—It's a downright dreary life, miss!"

"Have a care!" said Barbara solemnly, and Alice laughed.

"You see," she said, and paused a moment as if trying to say *Barbara*, "I'm used to think of ladies as if they were a different creation from us, and it seems rude to call you—*Barbara!*"

She spoke the name with such a lingering sweetness as made its owner thrill with a new pleasure.

"It seems," she went on, "like presuming to—to—to stroke an angel's feathers!"

"And much I'd give for the angel," cried Barbara, "that wouldn't like having his feathers stroked by a girl like you! He might fly for me, and go—where he'd have them singed!"

"Then I *will* call you Barbara; and I will answer *any* question you like to put to me!"

"And your mother, I daresay, is rather trying when you come home?" said Barbara, resuming her examination, and speaking from experience. "Mothers are—a good deal!"

"Well, you see, miss—Barbara, my mother wasn't used to a hard life like us, and Artie—that's my brother—and I have to do our best to keep her from feeling it; but we don't succeed very well—not as we should like to, that is. Neither of us gets much for our day's work, and we can't do for her as we would. Poor mamma likes to have things nice; and now that the money she used to have is gone—I don't know how it went: she had it in some bank, and somebody speculated with it, I suppose!—anyhow, it's gone, and the thing can't be done. Artie grows thinner and thinner, and it's no use! Oh, miss, I know I shall lose him! and when I think of it, the whole world seems to die and leave me in a brick-field!"

She wept a moment, very quietly, but very bitterly.

"I know he does his very best," she resumed, "but she won't see it! She thinks he might do more for her! and I'm sure he's dying!"

"Send him to me," said Barbara; "I'll make him well for you."

"I wish I could, miss—I mean *Barbara!* Oh, ain't there a lot of nice things that can't ever be done!"

"Does your mother do nothing to help?"

"She don't know how; she ain't learned anything like us. She was brought up a lady. I remember her saying once she ought to 'a' been a real lady, a lady they say *my lady* to!"

"Indeed! How was it then that she is not?"

"I don't know. There are things we don't dare ask mamma about. If she had been proud of them, she would have told us without asking."

"What was your father, Alice?"

The girl hesitated.

"He was a baronet, Barbara.—But perhaps you would rather I said *miss* again!"

"Don't be foolish, child!" Barbara returned peremptorily.

"I suppose my mother meant that he promised to marry her, but never did. They say gentlemen think no harm of making such promises—without even meaning to keep them!—I don't know!—I've got no time to think about such things,—only——"

"Only you're forced!" supplemented Barbara. "I've been forced to think about them too—just once. They're not nice to think about! but so long as there's snakes, it's better to know the sort of grass they lie in!—Did he take your mother's money and spend it?"

"Oh, no, not that! He was a gentleman, a baronet, you know, and they don't do such things!"

"Don't they!" said Barbara. "I don't know what things *gentlemen* don't do!—But what happened to the money? There may be some way of getting it back!"

"There's no hope of that! I'll tell you how I think it was: my father didn't care to marry my mother, for he wanted a great lady; so he said good-bye to her, and she didn't mind, for he was a selfish man, she said. So she took the money, for of course she had to bring us up, and couldn't do it without—and what they call invested it. That means, you know, that somebody took charge of it. So it's all gone,

and she gets no interest on it, and the shops won't trust us a ha'penny more. We can't always pay down for the kind of thing she likes, and must take what we can pay for, or go without; and she thinks we might do better for her if we would, and we don't know how. The other day—I don' like to tell it of her, even to you, Barbara, but I'm afraid she had been taking too much, for she went to Mrs. Harman and took me away, and said I could get much better wages, and she didn't give me half what my work was worth. I cried, for I couldn't help it, I was that weak and broken-like, for I had had no breakfast that morning—at least not to speak of, and I got up to go, for I couldn't say a word, and wanted my mother out of the place. But Mrs. Harman—she *is* a kind woman !—she interfered, and said my mother had no right to take me away, and I must finish my month. So I sat down again, and my mother was forced to go. But when she was gone, Mrs. Harman said to me, 'The best thing after all,' says she, 'that you can do, Ally, is to let your mother have her way. You just stop at home till she gets you a place where they'll pay you better than I do ! She'll find out the sooner that there isn't a better place to be had, for it's a slack time now, and everybody has too many hands ! When her pride comes down a bit, you come and see whether I'm able to take you on again.' Now wasn't that good of her ? "

"M–m–m !" said Barbara. "It was a slack time ! —So you went home to your mother ? "

"Y– –and it was just as Mrs. Harman said : there wasn't a stitch wanted ! I went from place to place, asking—I nearly killed myself walking about : walking's harder for one not used to it than sitting ever so

long! So I went back to Mrs. Harman, and told her. She said she couldn't have me just then, but she'd keep her eye on me. I went home nearly out of my mind. Artie was growing worse and worse, and I had nothing to do. It's a mercy it was warm weather; for when you haven't much to eat, the cold is worse than the heat. Then in summer you can walk on the shady side, but in winter there ain't no sunny side. At last, one night as I lay awake, I made up my mind I would go and see whether my father was as hard-hearted as people said. Perhaps he would help us over a week or two; and if I hadn't got work by that time, we should at least be able to bear the hunger! So the next day, without a word to mother or Artie, I set out and came down here."

"And you didn't see Sir Wilton?"

"La, miss! who told you? Did I let out the name?"

"No, you didn't; but, though there are a good many baronets, they don't exactly crowd a neighborhood! What did he say to you?"

"I ain't seen him yet, miss,—Barbara, I mean! I went up to the lodge, and the woman looked me all over, curious like, from head to foot; and then she said Sir Wilton wasn't at home, nor likely to be."

"What a lie!" exclaimed Barbara.

"You know him then, Barbara?"

"Yes; but never mind. I must ask all my questions first, and then it will be your turn. What did you do next?"

"I went away, but I don't know what I did. How I came to be sitting on that stone inside that gate, I can't tell. I think I must have gone searching for a

place to die in. Then Richard came. I tried hard to keep him from knowing me, but I couldn't."

"You knew that Richard was there?"

"Where, miss?"

"At the baronet's place—Mortgrange."

"Lord, miss! Then they've acknowledged him!"

"I don't know what you mean by that. He's there mending their books."

"Then I oughtn't to have spoken. But it don't matter—to you, Barbara! No; I knew nothing about him being there, or anywhere else, for I'd lost sight of him. It was a mere chance he found me. I didn't know him till he spoke to me. I heard his step, but I didn't look up. When I saw who it was I tried to make him leave me—indeed I did, but he would take me! He carried me all the way to the cottage where you found me."

"Why didn't you want him to know you? What have you against him?"

"Not a thing, miss! He would be a brother to me if I would let him. It's a strange story, and I'm not quite sure if I ought to tell it."

"Are you bound in any way not to tell it?"

"No. *She* didn't tell me about it."

"You mean your mother?"

"No; I mean his mother."

"I am getting bewildered!" said Barbara.

"No wonder, miss! You'll be more bewildered yet when I tell you all!"

She was silent. Barbara saw she was feeling faint.

"What a brute I am to make you talk!" she cried, and ran to fetch her a cup of milk, which she made her drink slowly.

"I must tell you *everything*!" said Alice, after lying a moment or two silent.

"You shall, to-morrow," said Barbara.

"No; I must now, please! I must tell you about Richard!"

"Have you known him a long time?"

"I call him Richard," said Alice, "because my brother does. They were at school together. But it is only of late—not a year ago, that I began to know him. He came to see Arthur once, and then I went with Arthur to see him and his people. But his mother behaved very strangely to me and asked me a great many questions that I thought she had no business to ask me. Before that, I had noticed that she kept looking from Arthur to Richard, and from Richard to Arthur, in the oddest way; I couldn't make it out. Then she asked me to go to her bedroom with her, and there she told me. She was very rough to me, I thought, but I must say the tears were in her own eyes! She said she could *not* have Richard keeping company with us, for she knew what my mother was, and who my father was, and we were not respectable people, and it would never do. If she heard of Richard going to our house once again, she would have to do something we shouldn't like. Then she cried quite, and said she was sorry to hurt me, for I seemed a good girl, and it wasn't my fault, but she couldn't help it; the thing would be a mischief. And there she stopped as if she had said too much already. You may be sure I thought myself ill-used, and Arthur worse; for we both liked Richard, though my mother didn't think him at all our equal, or fit to be a companion to Arthur; for Arthur was a clerk, while Richard worked with his hands. Arthur

said he worked with his hands too, and turned out far poorer work than Richard—stupid figures instead of beautiful books: and I said I worked with my needle quite as hard as Richard with his tools; but it had no effect on my mother: her ways of looking at things are not the same as ours, because she was born a lady. Why don't a lady *have* ladies, Barbara?"

"Never you mind, Alice! Every good woman will be a lady one day—I am sure of that! It was cruel to treat you so! How anybody belonging to Richard could do it, I can't think: he's so gentle and good himself!"

"He's the kindest and best of—of men, and I love him," said Alice, earnestly. But I must tell you, Barbara—I must make you understand that I have a right to love him. When I told poor Arthur, as we went home that night, that he wasn't to see any more of Richard, he could not help crying. I saw it, though he tried to hide it. Of course I didn't let him know I saw him cry. Men are ashamed of crying. I ain't a bit. For Richard was the only school-fellow ever was a friend to Artie. He once fought a big fellow that used to torment him! By the time we got home, I was boiling over with rage, and told mamma all about it. Angry as I was, her anger frightened mine out of me. 'The insolent woman!' she cried. 'But I'll soon have a rod in pickle for her! I'll have my revenge of her—that you shall soon see! My children weren't good enough for her tradesman-fellow, weren't they! She said that, did she? She ain't the only one has got eyes in her head! Didn't you see me look at him as sharp as she did at you? If ever face told tale without meaning to tell it, that's the face of the young man you call Richard!

He's a Lestrange, as sure's there's a God in heaven! He's got the mark as plain as Sir Wilton himself! —not a feature the same, I grant, but Lestrange is writ in every one of them! I'll take my oath who was *his* father!—And there she goes as mim and as prim——!' 'No, mamma, I said, 'that she does not. She looks as fierce as a lioness!' I said. 'What's her name?' asked my mother. 'Tuke,' I answered. 'Was there ever such a name!' she cried. 'It's fitter for a dog than a human being! But it's good enough for her anyway. What was her m iden name? Who was she? There's the point!' 'But if what you suspect be true, mamma,' I said, 'then she had good reason for wishing us parted!' 'She ought to have come to me about it!' said my mother. 'She ought to have left it to me to say what should be done! I'm not married to a dirty tradesman!' I'm not telling you exactly what she said, miss, because when she loses her temper, poor mamma don't always speak quite like a lady, though of course she *is* one, all the same! I said no more, but I thought how kindly Richard always looked at me, and my heart grew big inside me to think that Artie and I had him for our own brother. Nobody could touch that! He had notions I didn't like—for, do you know, Barbara, he believes we just go out like a candle that can never again be lighted any more. He thinks there's no life after this one! He can't have loved anybody much, I fear, to be able to think that! You don't agree with him, I'm certain, miss! But I thought, if he was my brother, I might be able to help change his mind about it. I thought I would be so good to him that he wouldn't like me to die forever and ever, and

would come to see things differently. I had no friend, not one, you see, miss—Barbara, I mean—except Arthur, and he never has much to say about anything, though he's as true as steel; and I thought it would be bliss to have a man-friend—I mean a good man for a real friend, and I knew Richard would be that, though he was a brother! Most brothers are not friends to poor girls. I know three whose brothers get all they can out of them, and don't care how they have to slave for it, and then spend it on treats to other girls! But I was sure Richard was good, though he wasn't religious! So I said to mamma that, now we knew all about it, there could be no reason why we shouldn't see as much of each other as ever we liked, seeing Richard was our brother. But she paid no heed to me; she sat thinking and thinking; and I read in her face that she was not in a brown study, but trying to get at something. It was many minutes before she spoke, but she did at last, and what she told us is my secret, Barbara! But I'm not bound to keep it from you, for I know you would not hurt Richard, and you have a right to know whatever I know, for you found my life and wrapped it up in love and gave it back to me, *dear* Barbara!—It was not a pretty story for a mother to tell her children—and it's a sore grief not to be able to think *every*thing that's good of your mother; but it's all past now;—and it isn't our fault—is it, Barbara?"

"Your fault!" cried Barbara. "What do you mean?"

"People treat us as if it were."

"Never you mind. You've got a Father in heaven to see to that!"

"Thank you, Barbara! You make me so happy! Now I can tell you all!—'I've got it!' cried my mother. 'Bless my soul, what an ass I was not to see through it at once! Now you just listen to me: Sir Wilton was married before he married his present wife. He never thought of getting rid of me for the first one, you understand, for she wasn't a lady—though they do say she *was* a handsome creature! She was that low, you wouldn't believe!—just nobody at all! Her father was—what do you think? —a country blacksmith! And though he had me, he *would* marry her! Oh the men! the men! they are incomprehensible! It made me mad! To think he wouldn't marry me, and he would marry her, and I might have had him myself if I'd only been as hard-hearted and stood out as long! But the fact was, I was in love with your father! No one could help it, when he laid himself out to make you! I couldn't anyhow, though I tried hard. But *she* could! For all her beauty, she was that cold! ice was nothing to her! He told me so himself!—Well, when her time came, she died—never more than just saw the child, and died. I believe myself she died of fright; for Sir Wilton told me he was the ugliest child ever came into this world! He must, said his father, have come straight from the devil, for no one else could have made him so ugly! Well, what must your father go and do next, but marry an earl's daughter! —nobody too good for him after the blacksmith's? —and within a month or so, what should his nurse do but walk off with the child! From that day to this, so far as ever I've heard, there's been no news of him. It's years and years that all the world has given him up for lost. Now mark what I say: I feel

morally certain that this Richard, as you call him, is that same child, and heir to all the Lestrange property! That woman Tuke—what a name!—she's the nurse that carried him off; and who knows but the man married her for the chance of what the child's succession might bring them! They mean to tell the fellow, when the proper time comes, how they saved him from being murdered by his stepmother, and carried him off at the risk of their lives! Well they knew him for a pot of money! You may be certain they've got all the proofs safe! I hate the ugly devil! What right has he to come to an estate, and have my children looked down upon by Mrs. Bookbinder! I'll put a spoke in her wheel, though! I'll have one little finger in their pie! They sha'n't burn their mouths with it—no, not they!' I treasured every word my mother said—I was so glad all the while to think of Richard as the head of the family. I could not help the feeling that I belonged to the family, for was not the same blood in Richard and in us? 'Alice,' my mother said, 'mark my words! That Richard, as you call him, is heir to the title and estate! But if you speak one word on the subject until I give you leave, to your Richard or to any live soul, I'll tear your tongue out—I will!—And you know well that what I say, I do!' I knew well that poor mamma very seldom did what she said, and I was not afraid of her; but I grew more and more afraid of doing anything to interfere with Richard's prospects. I met him one night in Regent street, a terrible, stormy night, and was so fluttered at seeing him, and so frightened lest I should let something out that might injure him, that I nearly killed myself by running against a lamp-post in my

hurry to get away from him. But to be quite honest with you, Barbara, what I was most afraid of was, that he would go on falling in love with me; and that, when he found out what we were to each other, it would break his heart: I have heard of such a thing! For you see I durst not tell him! And besides, it mightn't be so, after all! So I had to be cruel to him! He must have thought me a brute! And now for him to appear, far away from everywhere, just in time to save me from dying of cold and hunger—ain't it wonderful?"

But Barbara sat silent. It was her turn to sit thinking and thinking. Why had the strange story come to her ears? There must be something for her to do in the next chapter of it!

"How much do you think Richard may know about the thing?" she asked.

"I don't believe he has a suspicion that he is anything but the son of the book-binder," Alice answered. "If Mrs. Tuke did take him, I wonder why it really was. What do you think, Barbara? To me she does not look at all a designing woman. She may be a daring one: I could fancy her sticking at nothing she saw reason for! If she did it, she *must* have done it for the sake of the child!"

"It was much too great a risk to run for any advantage to herself," assented Barbara. "Then they have had to provide for him all the time! Have they any children of their own?"

"I don't think any."

"Then it is possible she took such a fancy to the child she was nursing, that she could not bear to part with him. I have heard of women like that, out with us.—But what are we to do, Alice? Is it right to

leave the thing so? Ought we not to do anything?"

"I don't know; I can't tell a bit!" answered Alice. "I have thought and thought, lying alone in the night, but never could make up my mind. Supposing you were sure it was so, there is yet the danger of interfering with those who know all about him, and can do the best for him; and there's the danger of what my mother might be tempted to do the moment any one moved in the matter. To hasten the thing might spoil all!—Isn't it strange, Barbara, how much your love for your mother seems independent of her—her character?"

"I don't know;—yes, I think you are right. There is my mother, who has no guile in her, but is ready to burn you to ashes before you know what she is angry about! When you trust her, and go to her for help, she is ready to die for you. I love her with all my heart, but I can't say she's an exemplary woman. I don't think Mr. Wingfold—that's our clergyman—would say so either, though he professes quite an admiration of her."

Thereupon Barbara told Alice the story of her mother's behavior in church, and how the parson had caught her.

"But nobody knows to this day," she concluded, "whether he intended so to catch her, or was only teaching his people by a parable, and she caught herself in its meshes. Caught she was, anyhow, and has never entered the church since! But she speaks very differently of the clergyman now."

"I feel greatly tempted sometimes," resumed Alice, "to let Richard know; for, surely, whatever be the projects of other people concerning him, a man has the right to know where he came from!"

"Yes," answered Barbara, "a man must have the right to know what other people know about him! And yet it would be a pity to ruin the plans of good people who had all the time been working and caring for him. I wonder if he was in danger from Lady Ann? I have heard out there of terrible things done to get one's way! She *is* a death-like woman! His nurse might well be afraid of what his stepmother might do! I can quite fancy her making off with him in an agony of terror lest he should be poisoned. or smothered, or buried alive! But what if they sent him away, with a hint to the nurse that his absence might as well be permanent? What if any search they made for him was nothing but a farce? I wish we knew what ground there is for inquiring whether he may not be the child that was lost—if indeed there was a child lost! I have not heard at the house any allusion to such an occurrence."

Much more talk ensued. The girls came to the conclusion that, for the present, they must do nothing that might let the secret out of their keeping. They must wait and watch: when the right thing grew plain, they would do it!

CHAPTER XXX.

BARBARA THINKS.

BARBARA rode home with strange things in her mind. Here was a romance brought to her very door! She was nowise hungry after romance, being of the essence of romance her own lovely self, in the simplicity which carried her direct to the heart of things. She was life in such relation to life, that her very existence was natural romance. How should there be any romance to equal that of pure being, of existence regarded and encountered face to face, of the voyage forth from the heart of life, and the toilsome journey, peril-beset, back to the home of that same heart of hearts! Here was one wrapt in a strange cloud: Why should she not pass through the cloud, and join her fellow-traveller within?

Naturally then, from this time, the thoughts of Barbara rested not a little upon the person and undevloped history of the man with whose being she was before linked by a greater indebtedness than any but herself could understand. Any enlargement of relation to the unseen world—the world, I mean, of thought and reality, region of recognizable relation, or force—is an immeasurably more precious gift than any costliest thing that a mortal may call his own until death, but must then pass on to another; and Richard had thrown open to Barbara the wealthiest regions of the literature of her race! She, on her part, had so much influenced him, that he had at least

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Richard himself knew! At the same time she felt that she had no right to tell him what she almost believed; she ought first to be certain of it! If the conjecture were untrue, what harm might it not, believed by him, occasion both to him and his parents! Supposing it true, if those who had cherished him all his life did not tell him the fact, could it be right in her, coming by accident upon it, to acquaint him with it? Whether true or not, it must, if believed by him, change the whole tenor of his way —might perhaps, seeing he had no faith in God, destroy the very tone of his life; certainly, if untrue, it would cause endless grief to the parents whom to believe it would be to repudiate! Richard was indeed, she allowed, in less danger of being injured by the suggestion than any other young man she had known; but the risk, a great one, was there.

She did not now, therefore, go so often to Mortgrange. Every day she went out for her gallop—unattended, for, accustomed to the freedom of hundreds of leagues of wild country, the very notion of a groom behind her was hateful—and would often find herself making for some point whence she could see the chimneys of the house when the resolve of the day was one of abstinence, but that resolve she never broke. If it was not the drawing-room and Theodora, but the library and Richard; not the hideous flowers that happily never came alive from Lady Ann's needle, but the old books reviving to autumnal beauty under the patient, healing touch of the craftsman, that ever drew her all the way, who can wonder? Or who will blame her but such as Lady Ann, whose kind, though slowly, yet surely vanishes—melting, like the grimy snow of our streets,

before the sun of righteousness, and the coming kingdom.

Lady Ann and she were now on the same footing as before their misunderstanding, if indeed their whole relation was anything better than a misunderstanding; for what Lady Ann knew of Barbara she misunderstood, and what she did not know of Barbara was the best of her; while what Barbara knew of Lady Ann, she also misunderstood, and what she did not know of Lady Ann was the worse of her. But Barbara had told Lady Ann that she was sorry she had spoken to her as she had, and Lady Ann had received the statement as an expected apology. Their quarrel had indeed given Lady Ann no uneasiness. Daughter of one ancient house, and mother in another, a pillar of society, a live dignity with matronly back flat as any coffin-lid, she was of course in the right, and could afford to await the acknowledgment of wrong due and certain from an ill bred and ill educated chit of the colonies! For how could any one continue indifferent to the favor of Lady Ann! She was incapable of perceiving the merit of Barbara's apology, or appreciating the sweetness from which it came. For the genial Barbara could not bear dissension. She had seen enough of it to hate it. In just defense of a friend she would fight to the last, but in any matter of her own, she was ready to see, or even imagine herself in the wrong. Anger in its reaction always made her feel ill, which feeling she was apt to take for a reminder from conscience, when she would make haste to apologize.

Lady Ann's relations with Barbara were therefore not so much restored as unchanged. The elder lady

neither sought nor avoided the younger, gave her always the same cold welcome and farewell, yet was as much pleased to see her as ever to see anybody. She regarded her as the merest of butterflies, with pretty flutter and no stay—a creature of wings and nonsense, carried hither and thither by slightest puff of inclination: it was the judgment of a caterpillar upon a humming-bird. There was more stuff in Barbara, with all her seeming volatility, than in a wilderness of Lady Anns. The friendship between such a twain could hardly consist in more than the absence of active disapproval.

When Barbara went into the library, she would always greet Richard as if she had seen him but the day before, asking what piece of work he was at now, and showing an interest in it as genuine as her interest in himself. If there was anything in it she did not quite understand, he must there and then explain it. So eager was she to know, that he had not seldom to remind her that his minutes were not his own. But now and then he would lay aside his work for a time, never forgetting to make up for the interval afterward, and show her some process from beginning to end. For Barbara, finding now more time on her hands, had begun to try her repairing faculty on some of the old books in the house, hoping one day to surprise Richard with what she had done, and this led to her asking many and far-reaching questions in the art.

But Richard continued to give her his more important aid: he was still her master in literature, directing her what to read and what to meditate, and instructing her how to get her mind to rest on things. He was the most capable of teachers, for he followed

simply the results of his own experience. Having prepared for her, with his father's help, a manuscript book of hand-made paper, bound in levant morocco, the edges gilded in the rough, he made her copy certain poems into it, attending carefully to every point and each minutest formality. He would not have her copy whatever she might choose; she could not yet, he said, choose to advantage; for she was of such a "keen clear joyance," that, happy over what was not the best, she would waste her love. But neither would he altogether choose for her: from among the poems he had already brought before her she must take those she liked best! This, he said, would make her choice a real one, for it would take place between poems already known to her, with regard to which therefore she was in a position to determine her own preference. Then the unavoidable brooding over it caused in the copying of the one chosen, would make it grow in her mind, and assume something of the shape it had in the author's.

To Arthur Lestrange, who, notwithstanding the unlikeness between him and Barbara, and notwithstanding the frequent shocks his conventional propriety received from her divine liberty, had been for some time falling in love with her, these interviews, which he never hesitated to interrupt the moment he pleased, could hardly be agreeable. He never supposed that in them anything passed of which he could have complained had he been the girl's affanced lover; but he did not relish the thought that she looked to the workman and not his employer for help in her studies. Nor was it consolation to him to be aware that he could no more give her what the workman

gave her, than he could teach her his bookbinding—and which also the eager Barbara grasped.

At Wylder Hall no questions were ever asked as to how she had spent the day. Her mother, although now that her twin was gone, she loved her best in the world, never troubled her head about what she did with herself. Although Barbara was now a little more at home than formerly, she and her mother were scarcely together an hour in a week except at meals. She thought Arthur Lestrange would make a good enough husband for Bab, and, having chanced on some sign that her husband cherished hopes of a loftier alliance, grew rather favorable to a match between them.

There was, however, a little betterment in Mrs. Wylder, and ceasing to go to church was only one of the indications of it. She had in her a foundation of genuine simplicity, and was in essence a generous soul. Any one who wondered at the combination of strange wild charm and honest strength in the daughter, would have wondered much less had he gained the least insight into what, beneath the ruin of earthquake and tornado, lay buried in the soul of her mother. The best of changes is slow in most natures, and the main question is, perhaps, whether it goes slowly because of feebleness and instability, and consequent frequency of relapse, or because of the root-nature, the thoroughness, and the magnitude of what has been initiated. But Mrs. Wylder was tropical: any real change in her would soon reach a point where it must become swift as well as comprehensive.

Since returning to the trammels of a more civilized life, Mr. Wylder had grown self-absorbed, and from

a loud, lawless man had become a sombre, sometimes morose person. One great cause of the change, however, was, that the remaining twin, his favorite, had for some time shown signs of a failing constitution. His increasing feebleness weighed heavily on his father. He had had a tutor ever since they came to England, but now they did little or no work together, spending their hours mostly in wandering about the grounds, and in fitful reading of books of any sort in which the boy could be led to take a passing interest. Barbara's heart yearned after him, but he was greatly attached to his nurse, and did not care for Barbara.

The dissension between husband and wife about the twins, had its origin mainly with the mother, but sprung from the generosity of her nature: the twin she favored was sickly from infancy. A woman such as Mrs. Wylder might have been expected to shrink from the puny, suffering creature, and give her affection and approbation to the other, as did her husband; but it was just here that the true in her, the the pure womanly, came to the surface and then to the front: the child had an appealing look, which, when first she saw him, went straight to the heart of the strong mother, and afterward roused, if not enough of the protective, yet all the defensive in her. From herself she did not, and from death she could not save him. He died rather suddenly, and now the strong one seemed slowly sinking. The mother did not heed him, and the father, for very misery, could scarcely look at him: he was to him like one dead already, only not dead enough to be buried.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WINGFOLD AND BARBARA.

THE bickerings between her father and mother had had not a little to do with the peculiar features of Barbara's life in the colony. As soon as she saw a cloud rising, having learned by frequent experience what it was sure to result in, she would creep away, mount one of the many horses at her choice, and race from the house like a dog in terror, till she was miles from the spot where her father and mother would by that time be writhing in fiercest wordy warfare. What the object of their wrangling might be, she never inquired. It was plain to her almost from the first that nothing was gained by it beyond the silence of fatigue ; and as that silence was always fruitful of new strife, it brought a comfort known to be but temporary. Had she not been accustomed to it from earliest childhood, it would have been terrible to her to see human lives going off in such a foul smoke of hell! Not a sentence was uttered by the one but was furiously felt as a wrong by the other—to be remorselessly met by wrong as flagrant, rousing in its turn the indignation of injury to a pain unendurable. It is strange that the man who most keenly feels the wrong done him, should so often be the most insensible to the wrong he does. So dominant is the unreason of the moment, that the injury he inflicts appears absolute justice, and the injury he suffers absolute injustice. Yet such dis-

putes turn seldom upon the main point a issue between the parties; it may not even once be mentioned, while some new trifle is fought over with all the bitterness of the alienation that lies gnawing and biting and burning beneath. War is raging between kingdoms for the possession of a hovel, which possessed, the quarrel were no nearer settlement than before!

Hence it came that Barbara paid so little regard to her mother's challenge of the clergyman. Single combat of the sort she seemed to seek was an experience of Barbara's life too often recurrent to be interesting; the thunders of its artillery, near or afar, passed over her almost unheeded. She had indeed sufficient respect for the forms of religion to regret that her mother should make her behavior in church the talk of the parish, and to be rather pleased that the clergyman should have had the best of it in his joust of arms with her, but further interest in the matter she scarcely took.

On a certain day, Miss Brown wanting at least one pair of new shoes, and her mistress cherishing the idea of a lesson in shoeing her, for which lesson arrangement had not even yet been made, Barbara, having been all the afternoon in the house, went out toward sunset, to have a walk with a book.

She was sauntering along a grassy road which, though within their own park, belonged to the public, when she almost ran against a man similarly occupied with herself, for he also was absorbed in the book he carried. I should like to know what two books brought them thus together! Each started back with an apology, then both burst into a modest laugh, which renewed itself with merrier ring, when

the first and then the second attempt to pass, with all space for elbow-room, failed, and they stood opposite each other in a hopeless mental paralysis.

"Fate is opposed to our unneighborliness!" said Mr. Wingfold. "She will not allow us to pass, and depart in peace! What do you say, Miss Wylder?—shall we yield or shall we resist?"

As he spoke, he held out his hand.

Now Barbara was the last person in the world to refuse, without a painfully good reason, any offered hand. She had never seen cause to desire the acquaintance of a man because he was a clergyman; but neither had she any unwillingness, because he was a clergyman, to make his acquaintance; while to Thomas Wingfold she already felt some attraction: the strong little hand was in his immediately, and felt comfortable in the great honest clasp, which it returned heartily.

"I never saw you on your own feet before, Miss Wylder!" said the clergyman.

"Nor on anybody else's, I hope!" she returned.

"Oh, yes, indeed!—on Miss Brown's many a time!"

"You know Miss Brown then? She is my most intimate friend!"

"I am well aware of that! Everything worth knowing in the parish, and a good deal that is not, comes to my ears."

"May I hope you count Miss Brown's affairs worth hearing about, then?"

"Of course I do! Does not a lady call her friend, whose acquaintance I have long wished to make! and do I not know that Miss Brown loves her in return! I cannot help sometimes regretting for a

moment that four-footed friends in general are so shortlived."

"Why only for a moment?" said Barbara.

"Because I remind myself that it must be best for them and us—best for the friendship between us, best for us every way. But indeed I have more to be thankful for in the relation than most people of my acquaintance, for I sometimes drive a pony yet that is over forty!"

"Forty years of age?"

"Yes."

"I should like to see that pony!'

"You shall see her, any day you will come to the parsonage. I will gladly introduce her to you, but it is getting rather late to desire her acquaintance: she does not see very well, and is not so good-tempered as she once was. But she will soon be better."

"How do you mean?"

"She has a process to go through out of which she will come ever so much the better."

"Good gracious! you're not going to have an operation performed on her—at *her* age?"

"She is going to have her body stript off her!"

"Good gracious!" cried Barbara again, but with yet greater energy—then seeing what he meant, laughed at her mistake.

"But then," she said, with eager resumption, "you must believe there is something to strip her body off? *I* do! I have always thought so!"

"So have I, and so I do indeed!" answered Wingford. "I can't prove it. I can't prove anything—to my own satisfaction, that is, though I dare say I might to the satisfaction of one who did not love the creatures enough to be anxious about them. I

don't think you can prove anything that is worth being anxious about."

"Then why do you believe it?" asked Barbara, influenced by the talk of the century.

"Because I *can*," answered Wingfold. "To believe and to be able to prove, have little or nothing to do with each other. To believe and to convince have much to do with each other."

"But," persisted Barbara, with Richard in her mind, "how are you to be sure of a thing you can't prove?"

"That's a good question, and this is my answer," said Wingfold:—"What you love, you already believe enough to put it to the proof of trial. My life is such a proving; and the proof is so promising that it fills me with the happiest hope. To prove with your brains the thing you love, would be to deck the garments of salvation with a useless fringe. Shall I search heaven and earth for proof that my wife is a good and lovely woman? The signs of it are everywhere; the proofs of it nowhere."

They walked along for a while, side by side, in silence. Which had turned and gone with the other neither knew. Barbara was beginning already to feel that safety which almost everybody sooner or later came to feel in Wingfold's company—a safety born of the sense that, in the closest talk, he never lay in wait for a victory, but took his companion, as one of his own people, into the end after which he was striving.

"Then," said Barbara at length, still thinking of Richard, "if you believe that even the beasts are saved, you must think it very bad of a man not to believe in a God!"

"I should think anyhow that he didn't care much

about the beasts—that he hadn't a heart big enough to take the beasts in!"

"But he couldn't, you know, if he didn't believe in God!"

"I understand; only, if he loved the poor beasts very much, and thought what a bad time they have of it in the world, I don't know how he could help *hoping*, at least, that there was a God somewhere who would somehow make up to them for it all! For my own part I don't know how to be content except the beasts themselves, when it is all over and the good time come, are able to say, 'After all, it is well worth it, bad as it was!'"

"But what if it was just that suffering that made the man think there could not be a God, or he would put a stop to it?"

"That looks to me very close to believing in God."

"How do you make that out?"

"If a man believed in a God that did not heed the suffering of the creation, one who made men and women and beasts knowing that they must suffer, and suffer only—and went on believing so however you set him thinking about it, I should say to him, 'You believe in a devil, and so are in the way to become a devil yourself.' A thousand times rather would I believe that there was no God, and that the misery came by chance from which there was no escape. What I do believe is that there is a God who is even now doing his best to take all men and all beasts out of the misery in which they find themselves."

"But why did he let them come into it?"

"That the God will tell them, to their satisfaction, so soon as ever they shall have become capable of

understanding it. There must be things so entirely beyond our capacity, that we cannot now see enough of them to be able even to say that they are incomprehensible. There must be millions of truths that have not yet risen above the horizon of what we call the finite."

"Then you would not think a person so very, very wicked for not believing in a God?"

"That depends on the sort of God he fancied himself asked to believe in. Would you call a Greek philosopher wicked for not believing in Mercury or Venus? If a man had the same notion of God that I have, or anything like it, and did not at least desire that there might be such a God, then I confess I should have difficulty in understanding how he could be good. But the God offered him might not be worth believing in, might even be such that it was a virtuous act to refuse to believe in him."

"One thing more, Mr. Wingfold—and you must not think I am arguing against you or against God, for if I thought there was no God, I should just take poison:—tell me, mightn't a man think the idea of such a God as you believe in too good to be true?"

"I should need to know something of his history rightly to understand that. Why should he be able to think anything too good to be true? Why should a thing not be true because it was good? It seems to me, if a thing be bad, it cannot possibly be true. If you say the thing is, I answer it exists because of something under the badness. Badness by itself can have no life in it. But if the man really thought as you suggest, I would say to him, 'You cannot *know* such a being does not exist: is it possible you should be content that such a being should not exist? If such

a being did exist, would you be content never to find him, but to go on forever and ever saying, *He can't be! He can't be! He's so good he can't be!* Supposing you find one day that there he is, will your defence before him be satisfactory to yourself: "There he is after all, but he was too good to believe in, therefore I did not try to find him"? Will you say to him—"*If you had not been so good, if you had been a little less good, a little worse, just a trifle bad, I could and would have believed in you?*"'"

"But if the man could not believe there was any such being, how could he have heart to look for him?"

"If he believed the idea of him so good, yet did not desire such a being enough to wish that he might be, enough to feel it worth his while to cry out, in some fashion or other, after him, then I could not help suspecting something wrong in his will, or his moral nature somewhere; or, perhaps, that the words he spoke were but words, and that he did not really and truly feel that the idea of such a God was too good to be true. In any such case his maker would not have cause to be satisfied with him. And if his maker was not satisfied with what he had made, do you think the man made would have cause to be satisfied with himself?"

"But if he was made so?"

"Then no good being, not to say a faithful creator, would blame him for what he could not help. If the God had made his creature incapable of knowing him, then of course the creature would not feel that he needed to know him. He would be where we generally imagine the lower animals—

unable, therefore not caring to know who made him."

"But is not that just the point? A man may say truly, 'I don't feel I want to know anything about God; I do not believe I am made to understand him; I take no interest in the thought of a God'!"

"Before I could answer you concerning such a man, I should want to know whether he had not been doing as he knew he ought not to do, living as he knew he ought not to live, and spoiling himself, so spoiling the thing that God had made that, although naturally he would like to know about God, yet now, through having by wrong-doing injured his deepest faculty of understanding, he did not care to know anything concerning him."

"What could be done for such a man?"

"God knows—God *does* know. I think he will make his very life a terrible burden, so that for pure misery he will cry to him."

"But suppose he was a man who tried to do right, who tried to help his neighbor, who was at least so far a good man as to deny the God that most people seem to believe in—what would you say then?"

"I would say, 'Have patience. If there be a good God, he cannot be altogether dissatisfied with such a man. Of course it is something wanting that makes him like that, and it may be he is to blame, or it may be he can't help it: I do not know when any man has arrived at the point of development at which he is capable of believing in God: the child of a savage may be capable, and a gray-haired man of science incapable. If such a man says, 'The question of a God is not interesting to me,' I believe

him; but, if he be such a man as you have last described, I believe also that, as God is taking care of him who is the God of patience, the time must come when something will make him want to know whether there be a God, and whether he cannot get near him, so as to be near him.' I would say, 'He is in God's school; don't be too much troubled about him, as if God might overlook and forget him. He will see to all that concerns him. He has made him, and he loves him, and he is doing and will do his very best for him.'"

"Oh, I *am* so glad to hear you speak like that!" cried Barbara. "I didn't know clergymen were like that! I'm sure they don't talk like that in the pulpit!"

"Well, you know a man can't just chat with his people in the pulpit as he may when he has one alone to himself! For, you see, there are hundreds there, and they are all very different, and that must make a difference in the way he can talk to them. There are multitudes who could not understand a word of what we have been saying to each other! But if a clergyman says anything in the pulpit that differs in essence from what he says out of it, he is a false prophet, and has no business anywhere but in the realm of falsehood."

"Why is he in the church, then?"

"If there be any such man in the church of England, we have to ask first how he got into it. I used to think the bishop who ordained him must be to blame for letting such a man in. But I am told the bishops haven't the power to keep out any one who passes their examination, provided he is morally decent; and if that be true, I don't know what is to

be done. What I know is, that I have enough to do with my parish, and that to mind my work is the best I can do to set the church right."

"I suppose the bishops—some of them at least—would say, 'If we do not take the men we can get, how is the work of the church to go on?'"

"I presume that even such bishops would allow that the business of the church is to teach men about God: that they cannot get men who know God, is a bad argument for employing men who do not know him to teach others about him. It is founded on utter distrust of God. I believe the only way to set the thing right is to refuse the bad that there may be room for God to send the good. By admitting the false they block the way for the true. But the poor bishops have great difficulties. I am glad I am not a bishop! My parish is nearly too much for me sometimes!"

Barbara could not help thinking how her mother alone had been almost too much for him.

Their talk the rest of the way was lighter and more general; and to her great joy Barbara discovered that the clergyman loved books the same way the bookbinder loved them. But she did not mention Richard.

The parson took leave of her at a convenient issue from the park. But before she had gone many steps he came running after her and said—

"By the way, Miss Wylder, here are some verses that may please you! We were talking about our hopes for the animals! I heard the story they are founded on the other day from my friend the dissenting minister of the village. The little daughter of Dr. Doddridge, the celebrated theologian, was over-

heard asking the dog if he knew who made him. Receiving no reply, she said what you will find written there as the text of the poem."

He put a paper in her hand, and left her. She opened it, and found what follows :—

DR. DODDRIDGE'S DOG.

"What! you Dr. Doddridge's dog, and not know who made you?"

My little dog, who blessed you
With such white toothy-pegs?
And who was it that dressed you
In such a lot of legs?

I'm sure he never told you
Not to speak when spoken to!
But it's not for me to scold you :—
Dogs bark, and pussies mew!

I'll tell you, little brother,
In case you do not know :—
One only, not another,
Could make us two just so.

You love me?—Quiet!—I'm proving!—
It must be God above
That filled those eyes with loving!
He was the first to love!

One day he'll stop all sadness—
Hark to the nightingale!
Oh, blessed God of gladness!—
Come, doggie, wag your tail!

That's "Thank you, God!"—He gave you
Of life this little taste;
And with more life he'll save you,
Not let you go to waste!

So we'll live on together,
And share our bite and sup;
Until he says, "Come hither,"—
And lifts us both high up!

Barbara was so much pleased with the verses that she thought them a great deal better than they were.

Wingfold walked home thinking how, in his dull parish, where so few seemed to care whether they were going back to be monkeys or on to be men, he had yet found two such interesting young people as Richard and Barbara.

He had come upon Richard again at his grandfather's, had had a little more talk with him, and had found him not so far from the kingdom of heaven but that he cared to deny a false god; and he had just discovered in Barbara, who so seldom went to church and who came of such strange parents, one in whom the love of God was not merely innate, but keenly alive. The heart of the one recoiled from a God that was not; the heart of the other was drawn to a God of whom she knew little: were not the two upon converging tracks? What to most clergymen would have seemed the depth of a winter of unbelief, seemed to Wingfold a springtime full of the sounds of the rising sap.

"What man," he said to himself, "knowing the care that some men have of their fellow-men, even to the spending of themselves for them, can doubt that, loving the children, they must one day love the father! Who more welcome to the heart of the eternal Father than the man who loves his brother, whom also the unchanging Father loves!"

Personally, I find the whole matter of religious teaching and observance in general a very dull busi-

ness—as dull as most secular teaching. If salvation is anything like what are commonly considered its *means*, it is to me a consummation devoutly to be deprecated. But no one ever found Wingfold dull. For one thing he scarcely thought about the church, and never mistook it for the kingdom of God. Its worldly affairs gave him no concern, and party-spirit was loathsome to him as the very antichrist. He was a servant of the church universal, of all that believed or ever would believe in the Lord Christ, therefore of all men, of the whole universe—and first, of every man, woman, and child in his own parish. But though he was the servant of the boundless church, no church was his master. He had no master but the one Lord of life. Therefore the so-called prosperity of the church did not interest him. He knew that the Master works from within outward, and believed no danger possible to the church, except from such of its nominal pastors as know nothing of the life that works leavening from within. The will of God was all Wingfold cared about, and if the church was not content with that, the church was nothing to him, and might do to him as it would. He did not spend his life for the people because he was a parson, but he was a parson because the church of England gave him facilities for spending his life for the people. He gave himself altogether to the Lord, and therefore to his people. He believed in Jesus Christ as the everyday life of the world, whose presence is just as needful in bank, or shop, or house of lords, as at what so many of the clergy call the altar. When the Lord is known as the heart of every joy, as well as the refuge from every sorrow, then the altar will be known for what it is—an ecclesiastical

antique. The Father permitted but never ordained sacrifice; in tenderness to his children he ordered the ways of their unbelieving belief. So at least thought and said Wingfold, and if he did not say so in the pulpit, it was not lest his fellows should regard him as a traitor, but because so few of his people would understand. He would spend no strength in trying to shore up the church; he sent his life-blood through its veins, and his appeal to the Living One, for whose judgment he waited.

The world would not perish if what is called the church did go to pieces; a truer church, for there might well be a truer, would arise out of her ruins. But let no one seek to destroy; let him that builds only take heed that he build with gold and silver and precious stones, not with wood and hay and stubble! If the church were so built, who could harm it! if it were not in part so built, it would be as little worth pulling down as letting stand. There is in it a far deeper and better vitality than its blatant supporters will be able to ruin by their advocacy, or the enviers of its valueless social position by their assaults upon that position.

Wingfold never thought of associating the anxiety of the heiress with the unbelief of the bookbinder. He laughed a laugh of delight when afterward he learned their relation to each other.

The next Sunday, Barbara was at church, and never afterward willingly missed going. She sought the friendship of Mrs. Wingfold, and found at last a woman to whom she could heartily look up. She found in her also a clergyman's wife who understood her husband—not because he was small-minded, but because she was large-hearted—and fell in thoroughly

with his modes of teaching his people, as well as his objects in regard to them. She never sought to make one in the parish a churchman, but tried to make every one she had to do with a scholar of Christ, a child to his Father in heaven.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SHOEING OF MISS BROWN.

Two days after, on a lovely autumn evening, Barbara rode Miss Brown across the fields, avoiding the hard road even more carefully than usual. For Miss Brown, as I have said, was in want of shoes, and Barbara herself was to have a hand in putting them on.

The red-faced, white-whiskered, jolly old Simon stood at the smithy door to receive her: he had been watching for her, and had heard the gentle trot over the few yards of road that brought her in sight. With a merry greeting he helped her down from the great mare. It was but the sense that his blackness was not ingrain that kept him from taking her in his arms like a child, and lifting her down—so small was she, and so friendly and childlike. She would have shaken hands with him, but he would not with her: it would make her glove, he said, as black as his apron. Barbara pulled off her glove, and gave him her dainty little hand, which the blacksmith took at once, being too much of a gentleman not to know where respect becomes rudeness. He clasped the lovely loan with the sturdy reverence of his true old heart, saying her hand should pay her footing in the trade.

"Lord, miss, ain't I proud to make a smith of you!" he said. "Only you must do nothing but

shoe! I can't let you spoil your hands! You can keep Miss Brown shod without doing that!—Here comes Dick for his part! He might have left it to who taught him! Did he think the old man would be rough with missie?—I dare say, now, he's been teaching you that woman's work of his this long time!"

"Stop, stop, Mr. Armour!" cried Barbara. "When you see me shoe Miss Brown, perhaps you won't care to talk about woman's work again!"

Richard came up, took Miss Brown in, and put her in her place. The smith knew exactly what sort and size of shoes she wanted, and had them already so far finished that but a touch or so was necessary to make them an absolute fit. Barbara tucked up her skirt, and secured it with her belt. But this would not satisfy Simon. He had a little leather apron ready for her, and nothing would serve but she must put it on to protect her habit. Till this was done he would not allow her to touch hammer or nail.

"Come, come, missie," he said, "I'm king in my own shop, and you must do as I tell you!"

Thereupon Barbara, who had stood out only for the fun of the thing, put on the leather apron with its large bib, and set about her work.

Richard did not offer to put on the first shoe: he believed she had so often watched the operation, that she must know perfectly what to do. Nor was he disappointed. She proceeded like an adept. Happily Miss Brown was very good. She was neither hungry nor thirsty; she had had just enough exercise to make her willing to breathe a little; nothing had gone wrong on the way to upset her

delicate nerves—for gentle and loving as she always was, she was apt to be both apprehensive and touchy; her digestion was all right, for she had had neither too much corn nor too much grass; therefore she stood quite still, and if not exactly full of faith, was yet troubled by no doubt as to the ability of her mistress to put on her shoes for her—iron though they were, and to be fastened with long sharp nails.

Richard was nowise astonished at Barbara's coolness, or her courage, or the business-like way in which she tucked the great hoof under her arm, or even at the accurate aim which brought the right sort of blow down on the head of nail after nail in true line with its length; but he was astonished at the strength of her little hand, the hardness of her muscles, covered with just fat enough to make form and movement alike beautiful, and the knowing skill with which she twisted off the ends of the nails: the quick turn necessary, she seemed to have by nature. In her keen watching, she had so identified herself with the operator, that perfect insight had supplied the place of active experience, and seemed almost to have waked some ancient instinct that operated independent of consciousness. The mare was shod, and well shod, without any accident; and Richard felt no anxiety as he lifted the little lady to her back, and saw her canter away as if she had been presented with fresh feathery wings instead of only fresh iron shoes.

He experienced, however, not a little disappointment: he had hoped to walk a part of her way alongside of Miss Brown. Barbara had in truth expected he would, but a sudden shyness came upon her, and made her start at speed the moment she was in the

saddle. Simon and Richard stood looking after her.

With a sharp scramble she turned. Richard darted forward. But nothing was wrong with the mare. She came at a quick trot, and they were side by side in a moment. Barbara had bethought herself that it was a pity to get no more pleasure or profit out of the afternoon than just a horse-shoeing!

"She's all right!" she cried.

Richard imagined she had but started to put her handiwork to the test. They walked back to the old man, and once more she thanked him—in such pretty fashion as made him feel a lord of the world. Then Richard and she moved away together in the direction of Mortgrange, and left Simon praying God to give them to each other before he died.

They had not gone far when it became Richard's turn to stop.

"Oh, miss," he said, "I must go back! Neither of us has been to see Alice, and I haven't for more than a week! Think of her lying there, expecting and expecting, and no one coming! It's just the history of the world! I must go back!"

He would not have said so much but that Barbara sat regarding him without response of word or look, appearing not to heed him. He began to wonder.

"Alice can't be dead!" he thought with himself. "She was pretty well when I saw her last!"

"She is gone," said Barbara quietly, and the thought just discarded returned on Richard with a sickening clearness.

He stood and stared. Barbara saw him turn white, and understood his mistake—so terrible to one who had no hope of ever again seeing a departed friend.

"She went home to her mother yesterday," she said.

Richard gave a great sigh of relief.

"I thought she was dead!" he answered, "—and I had not been so good to her as I might have been!"

"Richard," said Barbara—it was the first time she called him by his name—"did anybody in the world ever do all he might to make his best friends happy?"

"No, miss, I don't think it. There must always be something more he might have done."

"Then the better people become, the more lamentations, mourning, and woe"—the words had taken hold of her at church the Sunday before—"there must always be, because of those they shall never look upon again, those to whom they shall never say, *I am sorry!* How comes it that men are born into a world where there is nothing of what they most need—consolation for the one inevitable thing, sorrow and self-reproach?"

"There is consolation—that it will soon be over, that we go to them!"

"Go to them!" cried Barbara. "—We do not even go to look for them! We shall not even know that we would find them if we could! We shall not have even the consolation of suffering, of loving on in vain! The whole thing is the most wrongful scorn, the most insulting mockery!—the laughter of a devil at all that is noble and tender!—only there is not even a devil to be angry with and defy!"

Barbara spoke with an indignation that made her eloquent. Richard gave her no answer: there was no logic in what Barbara said—nothing to reply to! Why should life not be misery? Why should there be any one who cared? There was no ground for

thinking there might be one! The proof was all the other way! The idea was too good to be true! Richard had said so to himself a thousand times. But was the world indeed on such a grand scale that to believe in anything better or other than it seemed, was to believe too much—was to believe more than, without proof which was not to be had, Richard would care to believe? The nature of the case grew clearer to him. As a man does not fear death while yet it seems far away, so a man may not shrink from annihilation while yet he does not realize what it means. To cease may well seem nothing to a man who neither loves much, nor feels the bitterness of regret for wrong done, the gnawing of that remorse whose mother is tenderness! He was beginning to understand this.

The silence grew oppressive. It was as if each was dreaming of the other dead. To break the pain of presence without communion, Richard spoke.

"Can you tell me, miss," he said, "why Alice went away without letting me know? She might have done that!"

"She had a good reason," answered Barbara.

"I can't think what it could be!" he returned. "I never was so long without seeing her before, but surely she could not be so much offended at that! You see, miss, I knew you went every day! and I knew I should like that better than having any one else to come and see me! so I gave myself no trouble. I never thought of her going for a long time yet! Did her mother send her money?"

"Not that I know of."

"Perhaps my grandfather lent her some! She

couldn't have any herself! I wonder why she dislikes me so much!"

He was doubting whether she would have taken money from him, if he had been in time to offer it. He did not like to ask Barbara if she had helped her. —And then what was she to do when she got home?

Barbara had let him talk, delighted to look in at the windows his words went on opening. In particular it pleased and attracted her, that he was so unconscious of the goodness he had shown Alice. Barbara and he made a rare conjunction of likeness. So many will do a kindness who are not yet capable of forgetting it!

Barbara could not tell him that Alice was afraid to bid him good-bye lest in her weakness she should render an explanation necessary. She did not in the least doubt Richard was her brother, and her heart was full of him. How often, as she lay alone, building her innocent and not very wonderful castles, had she not imagined herself throwing her arms about him, and kissing him at her will!—what if she should actually do so when he came to bid her good-bye! Then she would have to tell him he was her brother, and so perhaps might ruin everything. She must go without a word!

"She is far from disliking you," said Barbara.

"Why then did she not tell me, that I might have given her money for her journey?"

"There was no need of that," returned Barbara. "She is my sister now, and a sovereign or two is nothing between us."

"Oh, thank you! thank you, miss! Then she will have a little over when she gets home! But I am afraid it will be long before she is able to work

again! It would be of no use to tell my mother, for somehow she seems to have taken a great dislike to poor Alice. I am positive she does not deserve it. My mother is the best woman I know, but she is very stiff when she takes a dislike. Have you got her address, miss? Arthur would take money from me, I think, but I don't know where he is. I was always meaning to ask her, and always forgot."

"I will see she has everything she wants," answered Barbara.

"Bless your lovely heart, miss!" exclaimed Richard. "But I fear nothing much will reach them so long as their mother is alive. She eats and drinks the flesh and blood of her children. Nobody could help seeing it. There's Arthur, cold and thin, and miserable, without a greatcoat in the bitterest weather! and Alice with hardly flesh enough for setting to her great eyes! and Mrs. Manson well dressed, and eating the best butter, and drinking the best bottled stout that money can buy! If only their mother was like mine! If one of *her* family had to starve, she would claim it as her right. Such women as Mrs. Manson have no business to be mothers! Why were *they* made—if people *are* made?"

"Perhaps they will be made something of yet!" suggested Barbara.

"If you're right, miss, and there be a God, either he's not so good as you would be if you were God, or else somebody interferes, and won't let him do his best."

"Shall I tell you what our clergyman said to me the other day?" returned Barbara.

"Yes, if you please, miss. I don't mind what *you* say, because the God you would have me believe

is like yourself; and if he be, and be like you, he will set everything right as soon as ever he can."

"What Mr. Wingfold said was this—that it was not fair, when a man had made something for a purpose, to say it was not good before we knew what his purpose with it was. 'I don't like,' he said, 'even my wife to look at my verses before they're finished! God can't hide away his work till it is finished, as I do my verses, and we ought to take care what we say about it. God wants to do something better with people than people think.'"

"Is he a poet?" said Richard. "But when I think how he looked at the sunrise—of course he is! That man don't talk a bit like a clergyman, miss; he talks just like any other man—only better than I ever heard man talk before. I couldn't help liking him from the first, and wishing I might meet him again! But I think I could put him a question or two yet that would puzzle him!"

"I don't know," answered Barbara; "but one thing I am sure of, that, if you did puzzle him, he would say he was puzzled, and must have time to think it over!"

"That is to behave like a man!—and after all, clergymen are men, and there must be good men among them!—But do you think, miss, you could get Arthur's address from Alice? The office is not where it used to be."

"I dare say I could."

"You see, miss, I shall have to go back to London."

There was a tone and tremble in his words, to which, not to the words themselves, Barbara made reply.

"Will any one dare to say," she rejoined, "that we shall not meet again?"

"The sort of God you believe in, miss, would not say it," he answered; "but the sort of God my mother believes in would."

"I know nothing about other people's Gods," rejoined Barbara. "Indeed," she added, "I know very little about my own; but I mean to know more: Mr. Wingfold will teach me!"

"Take care he don't overpersuade you, miss. You have been very good to me, and I couldn't bear you to be made a fool of. Only *he* can't be just like the rest!"

"He will persuade me of nothing that doesn't seem to me true—be certain of that, Richard. And if it please God to part us, I will pray and keep on praying to him to let us meet again. If I have been good to you, you have been much better to me!"

Richard was not elated. He only thought, "How kind of her!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RICHARD AND VIXEN.

BARBARA turned her mare across the road, and sent her at the hedge. Miss Brown cleared it like a stag, and took a bee-line along the grass for Wylder Hall. Richard stood astonished. A moment before she was close beside him, and now she was nearly out of his sight! The angel that ascended from the presence of Manoah could scarcely have more amazed the Danite. Though Richard could shoe a horse, he could no more have stuck to Miss Brown over that hedge than he could have ascended with the angel. He watched till she vanished, and then watched for her reappearance at a point of hope beyond. Only when he knew that distance and intervention rendered it impossible he should see her more, did he turn and take his way to Mortgrange.

He was as much in love with Barbara as a man could be who indulged no hope whatever of marrying her—who was not even tempted to build the humblest castle for her in the air of possibility. But so far was his love from causing in him any kind of selfish absorption, that his heart was much troubled at Alice's leaving him without a farewell. Her behavior woke in him his first sense of the inexplicable: he little thought of its being but the first visible vapor of a mystery that involved both his past and his future. All he knew was, that the sister of his friend had, in a stormy night in London, fled from him as from a

wild beast; and that now, on a quiet morning in the country, she was gone from his grandfather's house without a word of farewell to him who had called him to her aid.

"There must be a reason for everything," he said to himself, "but some reasons are hard to find!"

The next day in the forenoon, Richard was busy as usual in the library. Doors and windows were shut against draughts, for he was working with gold-leaf on the tooling of an ancient binding. A door opened, and in came the goblin of the house. Perceiving what Richard was about, she came bounding, lithe as a cat, and making a wilful wind with her pinafore, blew away the leaf he was dividing on the cushion, and knocked a book of gold-leaf to the floor. The book-mender felt very angry, but put an extra guard on himself, caught her in a firm grasp, and proceeded to expel her. She threw herself on the floor, and began to scream. Richard took her up, laid her down in the hall, and closed and locked the door by which she had entered. Vixen lay where he laid her, and went on screaming. By and by her screaming ceased, and a few moments after, the handle of the door was tried. Richard took no notice. Then came a peremptory knock. Richard called out, "Who's there?" but no answer came except a repetition of the knock, to which he paid no heed. The knock was twice repeated, but Richard went on with his work, and gave no sign. Suddenly another door, which he had not thought of securing, burst open, and in sailed Miss Malliver, the governess, tall and slight, with the dignity she put on for her inferiors, to whom she was as insolent as to those above her she was cringing. True superiority she was incapable of

perceiving; real inferiority would have been hard to find.

"Man!" she exclaimed, the moment her wrath would allow her to speak, "what do you mean by your insolence?"

"If you allude to my putting the child out of the room," answered Richard, "I mean that she is rude, and that I will not be annoyed with her!"

"You shall be turned out of the house!"

"In the meantime," rejoined Richard, who had a not unnatural repugnance to Miss Malliver, and was now thoroughly angry, "I will turn you too out of the room, and for the same reason."

Richard felt, with every true gentleman, that the workman has a claim to politeness as real as that of any gentleman. The man who cannot see it is a cad.

"I dare you!" cried Miss Malliver, giving the rein to her innate coarseness.

Before he blames Richard, my reader must think how he might himself have behaved, had he been brought up among the people. I would have him reflect also that the woman who presumes on her sex, undermines its claim. Richard laid the tool he was using quietly aside, and approached her deliberately. Trusting, like King Claudius, in the divinity that hedged her, and not believing he would presume to touch her, the woman kept her ground defiantly until his hands were on the point of seizing her. Then she uttered a shriek, and fled. Richard closed the door behind her, made it also fast, and returned to his work.

But he was not to be left in peace. Another hand came to the door, and a voice demanding entrance

followed the foiled attempt to open it. He recognized the voice as Lady Ann's, and made haste to admit her. But her ladyship stood motionless on the door-mat, erect and cool. Anger itself could not warm her, for that she was angry was plain only from the steely sparkle in her gray eyes.

"You forget yourself! You must leave the house!" she said.

"I have done nothing, my lady," answered Richard, "but what it was necessary to do. I did not hurt the child in the least."

"That is not the point. You must leave the house."

"I should at once obey you, my lady," rejoined Richard, "but I am not at liberty to do so. Sir Wilton has the command of my time till the month of May. I am bound to be at his orders, whether I choose or not, except he tell me to go."

Lady Ann stood speechless, and stared at him with her icicle-eyes. Richard turned away to his work. Lady Ann entered, and shut the door behind her. Richard would have had to search long to discover the cause of her peculiar behavior. It was this: in his anger, he had flashed on her a look which she knew but could not identify, and which somehow frightened her. She must shape and identify the reminiscence! Familiar enough with the expression of her husband's face when he was out of temper, she had yet failed to identify with it that look on the face of his son. Had she known Richard's mother, she would probably have recognized him at once; for there was more of her as well as of his father in his expression when he was angry: there must have been a good many wrathful passages

between the two! In the face of their child the expression of the mother so modified that of the father, that Lady Ann could not isolate and verify it. She must therefore go on talking to him, keeping to the point, but not pushing it so as to bring the interview to an end too speedily for her purpose!

"Mr. ——,—I don't know your name," she resumed, "—no respectable house could harbor such behavior. I grant Sir Wilton is partly to blame, for he ought not to have allowed the library to be turned into a workshop. That however makes no difference. This kind of thing cannot continue!"

Richard went on with his work, and made no reply. Lady Ann looked in vain for a revival of the expression that had struck her. For a moment she thought of summoning Miss Malliver to do what she would not condescend to do herself, namely, enrage him, that she might have another chance with the suggested likeness; but something warned her not to risk—she did not know what. At the same time the resemblance might be to no person at all, but to some animal, or even, perhaps, some piece of furniture or china!

"You must not imagine yourself of importance in the house," she resumed, "because a friend of the family happens to be interested in the kind of thing you do—very neatly, I allow, but——"

She stopped short. At this allusion to Barbara, Richard's rage boiled up with the swelling heave in a full caldron on a great furnace. Lady Ann turned pale, pale even for her, murmured something inaudible, put her hand to her forehead, and left the room.

Richard's wrath fell. He thought with himself,

"I have frightened her! Perhaps they will leave me alone now!" He closed the door she had left open behind her, unlocked the other, and fell once more to his work.

For the time the disturbance was over. When Miss Malliver and Vixen, lingering near, saw Lady Ann walk past, holding her hand to her forehead, they also turned pale with fear: what a terrible man he must be who had silenced my lady in her own house, and had his own way with her! Vixen dared not go near him again for a long time.

But Lady Ann's perturbation did not last. She said to herself that she was a fool to imagine such an absurdity. She remembered to have heard, though at the time it had no interest for her, that the bookbinder had relatives in the neighborhood. Such a likeness might meet her at any turn: the kind of thing was of constant occurrence about estates! It improved the breed of the lower orders, and was no business of hers! A child had certainly been lost, with a claim to the succession; but was she therefore to be appalled at every resemblance to her husband that happened to turn up! As to that particular child, she would *not* believe that he was alive! He could not be! That, after so many years, she, an earl's daughter, would have to give way to a woman lower than a peasant, was preposterous!

It must be remembered that she knew nothing of the relation of the nurse to the child she had stolen, knew of no source whence light could fall upon their disappearance. Old Simon himself knew nothing of the affair till years after the feeble search for the child had ceased. Lady Ann had a strong hope that his birth had not been registered: she had searched for

it—with what object I will not speculate, but had not found it. She was capable of a good deal in some directions, for she came of as low a breed as her husband, with more cunning, and less open defiance in it; there was not much she would have blenched at, with society on her side, and a good chance of foiling in safety the low-born woman whose child had stood between her heritage and her hopes. It might be wrong, but it would be for the sake of right! Ought not imposture to be frustrated, however legalized? Would it not be both intrusion and imposture for a man of low origin to possess the ancient lands of Mortgrange, ousting a child of her family, born of her person, and bred in the brightest beams of the sun social?

I can well imagine her coming to reason thus. It may not seem natural that an angry look on the face of a man of whom she knew nothing should have thus set in action so important a train of thought, but to those who live in fear of an explosion, even the faintest rumbling is a sign of danger. Lady Ann had lived so long in dread lest the missing heir appear to claim his own that even the look of anger on the young bookbinder's face became for her the Lestrange look and troubled her accordingly. It might be a false conjecture but for the present, unnecessary as she was determined to think it, she yet resolved to do all that was left her to do; she would watch; and while she watched, would take care that the young man was subjected to no annoyance, lest in his wrath his countenance should suggest to another, as to herself, the question of his origin!

Thus it came that Richard heard nothing more of his threatened expulsion from Mortgrange.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BARBARA'S DUTY.

THE same afternoon appeared Barbara—as none knew when she might not appear—before the front windows of the house, perched upon her huge yet gracious Miss Brown. Arthur was in general upon the outlook for her, but to-day he was not, being more vexed with her than usual for withholding the encouragement he desired, and indeed imagined he deserved—not exactly from vanity, yet no less from an overweening sense of his own worth.

It is an odd delusion to which young men are subject, that, because they admire, perhaps even love a woman, they have a claim on her love. Arthur was confident that he loved Barbara as never man had loved, as never woman had desired to be loved, and counted it not merely unjust but cruel of her to show him no kindness that savored of like attraction. He did not know or suspect that a fortnight of the London season would go far to make him forget her. He was not a bad sort of a fellow, had no vice, was neither snob nor cad; his worse fault was pride in himself because of his family—pride in everything he had been born to, and in a good deal he fancied he had been born to, in which his having was small enough. He was not jealous of Barbara's pleasure in Richard's company. The slightest probe of such a feeling toward a man so infinitely beneath him, he would have felt degrading. To think of the two

together would have been to insult both Barbara and himself; to think of himself and the bookbinder for one briefest moment of comparison, would have been to insult all the Lestranges that ever lived. Tuke had no *raison d'être* but work for the library that would one day be Arthur's, and by its excellence add to the honor of Mortgrange! He forgot that Richard had opened his eyes to its merit, and imagined himself the discoverer of its value: did he not pay the man for his work? and is not what a man pays for his own? Does not the purchaser of a patent purchase also the credit of the invention? That the workman in the library knew as much more than he about the insides as about the the outsides of the books, gave him no dignity in his eyes: none but a university-man at least must gain honor by knowledge! The fact, however, did make him more friendly; and after he got used to Richard he seldom stiffened his jelly to remind him that their intercourse was by the sufferance of a humane spirit. Barbara's behavior to him had done nothing to humble him; for humiliation is at best but a poisoned and poisonous humility.

Little Vixen ran out to Barbara, and made herself less unpleasant than usual: the monkey was preparing her, by what blandishment she was mistress of, to receive a complaint against the man in the library which would injure him in her favor. Might Vixen but see motion and commotion, turmoil and passion around her, she did not care how it arose, or which of the persons involved got the worse of it. She accompanied Barbara to the stable, and as they walked back together, gave her such an account of what had taken place, that Barbara, distrusting the child, yet felt anxious. She knew the spirit of Richard, knew

that he would never show her ladyship the false respect a tradesman too often shows, and feared lest he should have to leave the house. She must give Lady Ann the opportunity of saying what she might please on the matter!

It must be remembered that Barbara was under no pledge of secrecy to Alice or any one; she was free to do what might seem for the best—that is, for the good of Richard. It was the part of every neighbor to take care of a blind man, particularly when there was special ground for caution unknown to him.

"I am sorry to find you so poorly, dear Lady Ann," she said, with her quick sympathy for suffering.

Vixen had told her that the horrid man had made her mamma quite ill; and Barbara found her with her boudoir darkened, and a cup of green tea on a Japanese table by the side of the couch on which she lay.

"It is only one of my headaches, child!" returned Lady Ann. "Do not let it disturb you."

"I am afraid, from what Victoria tells me, that something must have occurred to annoy you seriously!"

"Nothing at all worth mentioning. He is an odd person, that workman of yours!"

"He is peculiar," granted Barbara, doubtful of her own honesty because of the different sense in which she used the word from that in which it would be taken; "but I am certain he would not willingly vex any one."

"Children will be troublesome!" drawled her ladyship.

"Particularly Victoria," returned Barbara. "Mr. Tuke cannot bear to have his work put in jeopardy!"

"Very excusable in him."

Barbara was surprised at her consideration, and thought she must somehow be pleased with Richard.

"It would astonish you to hear him talk sometimes," she said. "There is something remarkable about the young man. He must have a history somewhere!"

She had been thinking whether it was fair to Sir Wilton and his family to conceal the momentous fact she alone of their friends knew: were they not those, next to Richard himself, most concerned in it? Should Lady Ann be allowed to go on regarding the property as the inheritance of her son, when at any instant it might be swept from his hold? Had they not a right to some preparation for the change? If there was another son, and he the heir, ought she not at least to know that there was such a person? She had resolved, that very morning, to give Lady Ann a hint of the danger to which she was exposed.

But there was another reflection, more potent yet, that urged Barbara to speak. Since learning Alice's secret, she had found herself more swiftly drawn toward Richard, nor could she escape the thought that he might one day ask her to be his wife: it would be painful then to know that she had made progress in his regard by being imagined his superior, when she knew she was not! Incapable of laying a snare, was she not submitting to the advantage of an ignorance? The misconception she was thus risking in the future, had already often prevented her from going to Mortgrange. Richard, she was certain, knew her better than ever to misjudge her, but she shrank from the suspicion of any one that she had hidden what she knew for the sake of securing

Richard's preference before their relations were altered—when, on a level with the choice of society, he might well think differently of her.

Barbara was one of those to whom concealment is a positive pain. She had a natural hatred, most healthy and Christian, to all secrets as such ; and to take any advantage of one would have seemed to her a loathsome thing. She constantly wanted to say all that was in her, and when she must not, she suffered.

"He may have good blood in him on one side," suggested Lady Ann. "He was rude to me, but I dare say it was the child's fault. He seems intelligent!"

"He is more than intelligent. I suspect him of being a genius."

"I should have thought him a tradesman all over!"

"But wouldn't genius by and by make a gentleman of him?"

"Not in the least. It might make him grow to look like one."

"Isn't that the same? Isn't it all in the look?"

"By no means. A man must *be* a gentleman or he is nothing! A gentleman would rather not have been born than not be a gentleman!" said Lady Ann.

She spoke to an ignorant person from the colonies, where they could not be supposed to understand such things, and never suspected the danger she and her false importance were in with the little colonial girl.

"But if his parents were gentlefolk?" suggested Barbara.

"Birth predetermines style, both in body and mind, I grant," said Lady Ann ; "education and

society must do their parts to make any man a gentleman; and where all has been done, I must confess to having seen remarkable failures. Bad blood must of course have got in somehow."

"I wish I knew what makes a gentleman!" sighed Barbara. "I have all my life been trying to understand the thing.—Tell me, Lady Ann—to be a gentleman, must a man be a good man?"

"I am sorry to say," she answered, "it is not in the least necessary."

"Then a gentleman may do bad things and be a gentleman still?"

"Yes—that is, *some* bad things."

"Do you mean—not *many* bad things?"

"No; I mean certain kinds of bad things."

"Such as cheating at cards?"

"No. If he were found doing that, he would be expelled from any club in London."

"May he tell lies, then?"

"Certainly not! It is a very ungentlemanly thing to tell lies."

"Then, if a man tells a lie, he is not a gentleman."

"I do not say that; I say that to tell lies is ungentlemanly."

"Does that mean that he may tell *some* lies, and yet be a gentleman?"

Lady Ann was afraid to go on. She saw that to go on answering the girl from the colonies, with her troublesome freedom of thought and question, might land her in a bog of contradictions.

"How many lies may a gentleman tell in a day?" pursued the straight-going Barbara.

"Not any," answered Lady Ann.

"Does the same rule hold for ladies?"

"Y—e—s——I should say so," replied her ladyship—with hesitation, for she suspected being slowly driven into some snare. She knew she was not careful enough to speak the truth—so much she confessed to herself, the fact being that, to serve any purpose she thought worth gaining, she would lie without a scruple—taking care, however, to keep the lie as like the truth as consisted with success, in order that, if she were found out, it might seem she had mistaken.

Barbara noted the uncertainty of the sound her ladyship's trumpet gave, and began to be assured that the laws of society were no firm stepping-stones, and that society itself was a morass, where one must spend her life in jumping from hump to hump, or be swallowed up.

She had been wondering how far, if Richard proved heir to a baronetcy, his education and manners would decree him no gentleman; but it was useless to seek light from Lady Ann. As they talked, however, the feeling came and grew upon her, that she was not herself acting like a lady, in going so much to her house, and being received by her as a friend, when all the time she knew something she did not know, something it was important for her to know, something she had a right and a claim to know. She would herself hate to live on what was not her own, as Lady Ann would be left to do when Sir Wilton died, if the truth about Richard remained undisclosed! It was very unfair to leave them unwarned for this reason besides, that so the fact might at last find them, for lack of preparation, without resource!

"I want to talk to you about something, Lady

Ann," she said. "You can't but know that a son of Sir Wilton's was stolen when he was a baby, and never found!"

It was the first time for many years that Lady Ann had heard the thing alluded to except once or twice by her husband. Her heart seemed to make a somersault, but not a visible muscle moved. What *could* the girl be hinting at? Were there reports about? She must let her talk!—the more freely the better!

"Every one knows that!" she answered. "It is but too true. It happened after my marriage. I was in the house at the time.—What of it, child! There can be little hope of his turning up now—after twenty years!"

"I believe he has turned up. I believe I know him."

Lady Ann jumped to the most natural, most mistaken conclusion.

"It's the bookbinder!" she said to herself. "He has been telling her a pack of lies! His being in the house is part of the plot. It must be nipped in the bud! If it be no lie, if he be the very man, it must be nipped all the same! Good heavens! if Arthur should *not* marry her—or some one—before it is known!"

"It may be so," she answered, quietly, "but it hardly interests me. I don't like talking of such things to a girl, but innocence cannot always be spared in this wicked world. The child you speak of was born in this house, and stolen out of it; but his mother was a low woman; she was not the wife of Sir Wilton."

"Everybody believed her his wife!" faltered Barbara.

"Very possibly! Very likely! She may even have thought so herself! Such people are so ignorant!" said Lady Ann with the utmost coolness. "He may even have married her after the child was born for anything I know."

"Sir Wilton must have made her believe she was his wife!" cried Barbara, her blood rising at the thought of such a wrong done to Richard's mother.

"Possibly," admitted Lady Ann with a smile.

"Then a baronet may tell lies, though a gentleman may not!" said Barbara, as if speaking to herself.

Lady Ann was not indignant. She had hesitated to say a lady might lie, but did not hesitate to lie the moment the temptation came, nor for that would doubt herself a lady! She knew perfectly that the woman was the wife of her husband as much as she herself was, and that she died giving birth to the heir. She had no hope that any lie she could tell would keep that child out of the property if he were alive and her husband wished him to have it; but a lie well told to Barbara might help to keep her for Arthur.

"Gentlemen think they *may* tell lies to women!" she returned with calmness, and just a tinge of regret.

"How are they gentlemen then?" cried Barbara; "or where is the good of being a gentleman? Is it that he knows better how to lie to a woman? A knight used to be every woman's castle of refuge; a gentleman now, it seems, is a pitfall in the bush!"

"It is a matter they settled among themselves," answered Lady Ann, confused between her desire to appear moral, and to gain her lie credit.

"I think I shall not call myself a lady!" said Barbara, after a moment's silence. "I prefer being a woman! I wonder whether in heaven they say *a woman* or *a lady!*"

"I suppose they are all sorts there as well as here," answered Lady Ann.

"How will the ladies do without gentlemen?" suggested Barbara.

"Why without gentlemen? There will be as many surely of the one sex as of the other!"

"No," said Barbara, "that cannot be! Gentlemen tell lies, and I am sure no lie is told in heaven!"

"All gentlemen do not tell lies!" returned Lady Ann, herself at the moment full of lying.

"But all gentlemen *may* lie!" persisted Barbara, "so there can be no gentlemen in heaven."

"I am sorry I had to mention the thing," returned Lady Ann, "but I was afraid your sweet romantic nature might cherish an interest where was nothing on which to ground it. Of course I know whence the report you allude to comes! *Any* man, bookbinder or blacksmith, may put in a claim. He will find plenty to back him. They will very likely get up a bubble-company, for speculation on his chance! His own class will be sure to take his part! Now that those that ought to know better have taught them to combine, the lower orders stick at nothing to annoy their superiors! But, thank heaven, the estate is *not* entailed!"

"If you imagine Mr. Tuke told me he was heir to Mortgrange, Lady Ann, you are mistaken. He does not know himself that he is even supposed to be."

"Are you sure of that? Who then told you? Is it likely his friends have got him in to the house,

under the eye of his pretended father, and he himself know nothing of the manœuvre?"

"How do you know it was he I meant, Lady Ann?"

"You told me so yourself."

"No; that I did not! I *know* I didn't, Lady Ann! What made you fix on him?"

Lady Ann saw she had committed herself.

"If you did not tell me," she rejoined, "your peculiar behavior to the man must have led me to the conclusion!"

"I have never concealed my interest in Mr. Tuke, but——"

"You certainly have not!" interrupted her ladyship, who both suffered in temper and lost in prudence from annoyance at her own blunder.

"Pray, hear me out, Lady Ann. What I want to say is, that my friendship for Mr. Tuke had begun long before I learned the fact concerning which I thought I ought to warn you."

"Friendship!—ah, well!—scarcely decorous!—but as to what you call *fact*, I would counsel a little caution. I repeat that, if the man be the son of that woman, which may be difficult to prove, it is of no consequence to any one: Sir Wilton was never married to his mother—*properly* married, I mean. I am sorry he should have been born out of wedlock—it is anything but proper; at the same time I cannot be sorry that he will never come between my Arthur and the succession."

Here Lady Ann saw a sudden radiance light up the face of Barbara, and change its expression, from that of a lady rightfully angry and a little scornful, to that of a child-angel. Entirely concerned hitherto with Richard's loss and pain, if what Lady Ann said should

be true, it now first occurred to her what she herself would gain if indeed he was not the heir: no one could think she had been his friend because he was going to be a rich man! If he was the wronged man her ladyship represented him—and her ladyship ought to know—she might behave to him as she pleased without suspicion of low motive! Little she knew what motives such persons as Lady Ann were capable of attributing—as little how incapable they were of understanding any generous motive!

Barbara had an insuperable, a divine love of justice. She would have scorned the thought of forsaking a friend because the very mode of his earthly being was an antenatal wrong to him. The righteousness that makes a man visit the sins of a father upon his children, is the righteousness of a devil, not the righteousness of God. When God visits the sins of a father on his children, it is to deliver the child from his own sins through yielding to inherited temptation. Barbara rejoiced that she was free to approach Richard, and make some amends to him for the ass-judgment of the world. I do not know that she said to herself, "Now I may love him as I please!" but her thought went in that direction.

It did not take Lady Ann long to interpret the glow on Barbara's face to her own satisfaction. The report she had heard and believed, had kept Barbara back from encouraging Arthur, and made her pursue her unpleasant intimacy with the bookbinder! the sudden change on her countenance indicated the relief of finding that Arthur, and not this man, was indeed the heir! How could she but prefer her Arthur to a man smelling of leather and glue, a man without the manners or education of a gentleman!

He might know a few things that gentlemen did not care to know, but even those he got only out of books! He could not do one of the many things her Arthur did! He could neither ride, nor shoot, nor dress, nor dance! He was tall, but he was clumsy! No doubt he was a sort of vulgar-handsome, but when out of temper, was ugly enough!

That Lady Ann condescended to such comparison, was enough to show that she believed the story at least half. The girl remaining silent.

"You will oblige me, dear Barbara," she said, "by not alluding to this report. It might raise doubt where it could not do serious harm!"

"There are others who not only know but believe it," answered Barbara.

"Who are they?"

"I do not feel at liberty to tell their names. I thought you had a right to know what was said, but I have no right to mention where I heard it."

Lady Ann grew thoughtful again, and as she thought grew convinced that Barbara had not spoken the truth, and that it was Richard who had told her: it is so easy for those who lie to believe that another is lying! It is impossible indeed for such to imagine that another, with what they would count strong reason for lying, would not lie. Gain is the crucial question for vile souls of any rank. She believed also, for they that lie doom themselves to believe lies as well as disbelieve truths, that Richard had got into the house in order to learn things that might serve in the establishing of his claim.

"It will be much better you should keep silent concerning the report," she said. "I do not want the question stirred. If the young man, any young

man, I mean, should claim the heirship, we must meet the thing as it ought to be met; till then, promise me you will be silent."

She would fain have time to think, for she feared in some way compromising herself. And in any case, the longer the crisis could be postponed, the better for her prospects in the issue!

"I will not promise anything," answered Barbara. "I dread promising."

"Why?" asked Lady Ann, raising her eyebrows.

"Because promises have to be kept, and that is sometimes very difficult, and because sometimes you find you ought not to have made them, and yet you must keep them. It is a horrid thing to have to keep a promise you don't like keeping, especially if it hurts anybody."

"But if you ought to make the promise!" suggested Lady Ann.

"Then you must make it. But where there is no *ought*, I think it wrong to bind yourself. What right have you, when you don't know what may be wanted of you, to tie your own hands and feet? There may come an earthquake or a fire!"

"Does friendship demand nothing? You are our guest!"

It was not in lying only that Lady Ann was not a lady.

"One's friends may have conflicting interests!" said Barbara.

Lady Ann was convinced that Richard was at the root of the affair, and she hated him. What if he *were* the heir, and it could be proved! The thought was sickening. It was with the utmost strain that she kept up her apparent indifference before the

mocking imp honest Barbara seemed to her. For heaven is the devil's hell, and the true are the devils of it. How was she to assure herself concerning the fellow? How discover what he was, what he knew, and how much he could prove? She could not even think, with that little savage sitting there, staring out of her wide eyes!

"My sweet Barbara," she said, "I am so much obliged to you for letting me know! I will not ask any promise from you. Only you must not heedlessly bring trouble upon us. If the thing were talked about, some unprincipled lawyer would be sure to take it up, and there would be another claimant-case, with the people in a hubbub, and thousands of ignorant honest folk duped of their money to enrich the rascality. I heard a distinguished judge once say, that, even if the claimant *were* the real Sir Roger, he had no right to the property, having so long neglected the duties of it as to make it impossible to be certain of his identity. Such people put the country to enormous expense, and are never of any service to it. It is a wrong to all classes when a man without education succeeds to property. For one thing he will always side with the tenants against the land. And what service can any such man render his country in parliament? Without a suitable training there can be no genuine right."

She was on the point of adding—"And then are the hopes and services and just expectations of a lifetime to go for nothing?" but checked herself and was silent.

To all this Barbara nad been paying little heed. She was revolving whether she ought to tell Richard what she had just heard. Neither then nor as she

rode home, however, could she come to a conclusion. If Richard was not the heir, why should she trouble him? But he might be the heir, and what then? She must seek counsel! But of whom? Not of her mother! As certainly not of her father! She had no ground for trusting the judgment of either.

Having got rid of Miss Brown, she walked to the parsonage.

But she did not find there such a readiness to give advice as she had expected.

"The thing is not my business," said Wingfold.

"Not!" returned the impetuous Barbara. "I thought you were *so* much interested in the young man! He told me the other day that he had seen you again, and had a long talk with you, and that you thought the popular idea of the inspiration of the Scriptures the greatest nonsense!"

"Did he tell you that I said it was much nearer the truth after all than the fancy that the Bible had no claim beyond any other book?"

"Yes, he did."

"That's all right!—Tell me then, Miss Wylder: are you interested in the young man because he is possibly heir to a baronetcy?"

"Certainly not!" answered Barbara, with indignation.

"Then why should I be?" pursued the parson. "What is it to me? I am not a county-magistrate even?"

"I cannot understand you, Mr. Wingfold!" protested Barbara. "You say you are there not for yourself but for the people, yet you will not move to see right done!"

"I would move a long way to see that Mr. Tuke

cared to do right: that is my business. It is not much to me, and nothing to my business, whether Mr. Tuke be rich or poor, a baronet or a bookbinder; it is everything to me whether Mr. Tuke will be an honest fellow or not."

"But if he should prove to have a right to the property?"

"Then he ought to have the property. But it is not my business to discover or to enforce the right. My business is to help the young man to make little of the matter, whether he find himself the lawful heir, or a much injured man through his deceived mother.—Tell me whose servant I am."

"You are the servant of Jesus Christ."

"—Who said the servant must be as his master.—Do you remember how he did when a man came asking him to see justice done between him and his brother?—He said, 'Man, who made me a judge and a divider over you? Take heed and beware of covetousness.'—It may be *your* business to see about it; I don't know; I scarcely think it is. My advice would be to keep quiet yet a while, and see what will come. There appears no occasion for hurry. The universe does not hang on the question of Richard's rights. Will it be much whether your friend go into the other world as late heir, or even late owner of Mortgrange, or as the son of Tuke, the bookbinder? Will the dead be moved from beneath to meet the young baronet at his coming? Will the bookbinder go out into dry places, seeking rest and finding none?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PARSON'S COUNSEL.

It was a happy thing for both Richard and Barbara that Barbara was now under another influence besides Richard's. The more she saw of Mr. and Mrs. Wingfold, the more she felt that she had come into a region of reality and life. Both of them understood what a rare creature she was, and spoke as freely before her as if she had been a sister of their own age and standing. Barbara on her side knew no restraint with them, but spoke in like freedom, both of her past life, and the present state of things at home—which was indeed no secret, being manifest to the servants, and therefore known to all the county, in forms more or less correct, as it had been to all the colony before they left it. She talked almost as freely of Richard, and of the great desire she had to get him to believe in God.

"It was a dangerous relation between two such young people!" some of my readers will remark.—Yes, I answer—dangerous, as every true thing is dangerous to him or her who is not true; as every good thing is dangerous to him or her who is not good. Nothing is so dangerous as religious sentiment without truth in the inward parts. Certain attempts at what is called conversion, are but writhings of the passion of self-recommendation; gapings of the greed of power over others; swellings of the ambition to propagate one's own creed, and prosely-

tize victoriously; hungerings to see self reflected in another convinced. In such efforts lie dangers as vulgar as the minds that make them, and love the excitement of them. But genuine love is far beyond such grovelling delights; and the peril of such a relation is in inverse proportion to the reality of those concerned.

Barbara was one who, so far as human eyes could see, had never required conversion. She had but to go on, recognize, and do. She turned to the light by a holy will as well as holy instinct. She needed much instruction, and might yet have fierce battles to fight, but to convert such as Barbara must be to turn them the wrong way; for the whole energy of her being was in the direction of what is right—that is, righteousness. She needed but to be told a good thing —I do not say *told that a thing was good*—and at once she received it—that is, obeyed it, the *only* way of receiving a truth. She did the thing immediately demanded upon every reception of light, every expansion of true knowledge. She was essentially *of* the truth; and therefore, when she came into relation with a soul such as Wingfold, a soul so much more developed than herself, so much farther advanced in the knowledge of realities as having come through difficulties unknown and indeed at present unknowable to Barbara, she met one of her own house, and her life was fed from his, and began to grow faster. For he taught her to know the eternal man who bore witness to his father in the face of his perverse children to know that his heart was the heart of a child in truth and love, and the heart of a God in courage and patience; and Barbara became his slave for very love, his blessed child, the inheritor of his universe.

Happily her life had not been loaded to the ground with the degrading doctrines of those that cower before a God whose justice may well be satisfied with the blood of the innocent, seeing it consists but in the punishing of the guilty. She had indeed heard nothing of that brood of lies until the unbelieving Richard —ah, not far from believing he who but rejected such a God!—gave her to know that such things were believed. From the whole swarm she was protected—shame that it should have to be said!—by pure lack of what is generally regarded as *a religious education*, such being the mother of more tears and madness in humble souls, and more presumption in the proud and selfish, than perhaps any other influence out of whose darkness God brings light. Neither ascetic nor mystic nor doctrinist of any sort, caring nothing for church or chapel, or observance of any kind as observance, she believed in God, and was now ready to die for Jesus Christ, in the eternal gladness that there was such a person as God and such a person as Jesus Christ. There being was to her the full and only pledge of every bliss, every childlike delight. She believed in the God of the whole earth, not in a puritanical God. She never imagined it could be wrong to dance; merry almost in her very nature, she now held it a duty to be glad. Fond of sweets, she would have thought it wrong to refuse what God meant her to like; but she had far more pleasure in giving than in receiving them. She got into a little habit of thanking God for Miss Brown every time she felt herself on her back. She saw, the moment she heard it, that whatever was not of faith was sin: "The idea," she said, "of taking a thing from God without thinking love back to him for it!" She shuddered at the thought

of unnecessarily hurting, yet would punish sharply. She would whip her dog when he deserved it, but sat up all night with him once when he was ill. She understood something of the ways of God with men.

Wingfold never sought to moderate her ardor for the good of her workman-friend; he only sought to strengthen her in the truth.

One day, when they were all three sitting together in the twilight before the lamp was lit—for Helen Wingfold was one of those happy women able to let their hands lie in their laps—he said to his pupil:

"Now, pray, Miss Wylder, don't try by argument to convince the young man of anything. That were no good, even if you succeeded. Opinion is all that can result from argument, and his opinion concerning God, even if you got it set right, would not be knowledge of God, and would be worth nothing; while, if a man knows God, his opinion is either right, or on the nearest way to be right. The notion in Richard's brain of the God he denies is but another form of the Moloch of the Ammonites. There never was, and never could be such a God. He in whom I believe is the God that says, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.' It is as if he said—'Look at that man: I am just such! No other likeness of me is a true likeness. Heed my son; heed nobody else. Know him and you know me, and then we are one forever.' Talk to Richard of the God you love, the beautiful, the strong, the true, the patient, the forgiving, the loving; the one childlike, eternal power and Godhead, who would die himself and kill you rather than have you false and mean and selfish. Let

him feel God through your enthusiasm for him. You can't prove to him that there is any God. A God that could be proved would not be worth proving. Make his thoughts dwell on such a God as he must feel would be worth having. Wake the notion of a God such as will draw him to wish there were such a God. There are many religious people who will tell you there is no such God as I mean; but God will love you for believing that he is as good and true as you can think. Throw the notions of any who tell you otherwise to the winds of hell. 'God is just!' said a carping theologian to me the other day. 'Yes,' I answered, 'and he cannot be pleased that you should call that justice which is injustice, and attribute it to him!' There are many who must die in ignorance of their Father in heaven, because they will not of their own selves judge what is right. Such never get beyond the weak and beggarly elements. Set in Richard's eye a God worth believing in, a God like the son of God, and he will go and look if haply such a God may be found; he will call upon him, and the God who is will hear and answer him. What good would it be, what could it bring but the more condemnation, that a man should be sure there was a God, if he did not cry to him? But although a man may never d ubt and never cry, I cannot imagine any man sure there is a God without his first having cried to him. God is God to us not that we may say *he is*, but *that we may know him;* and when we know him, then we are with him, at home, at the heart of the universe, the heirs of all things. All this is foolishness, I know, to the dull soul that cares only for the things that admit of being proved. The un-

provable mystery out of which come the things provable has for them no interest, they say, because it is unprovable: they take for granted that therefore it is unknowable. Would they be content it should be unknowable if things were all as they should be within them? When the eyes of those who have made themselves at home in the world of the senses and care for no other, are opened I imagine them saying—'Yes, He was after all; but none the less were you fools to believe in him, for you had no proof!' Then I seem to hear the children laugh and say, 'We had himself, and did not want it.' That the unprovable is necessarily the unknowable, a thousand beliefs deny. 'You cannot prove to me that you have a father!' says the blind sage, reasoning with the little child. 'Why should I prove it?' answers the child. 'I am sitting on his knee! If I could prove it, that would not make you see him; that would not make you happy like me! You do not care about my father, or you would not stand there disputing; you would feel about until you found him!' If a thing be true in itself, it is not capable of proof; and that man is in the higher condition who is able to believe it. In proportion as a man is a fool he is unable to believe what in itself is true. If intellect be the highest power, then the men of proof are the wisest; if there be something deeper than intellect, causing and including it, if there be a creative power of which our intellect is but a faint reflex, then the child of that power, the one who acknowledges and loves and obeys that power, will be the one to understand it. If a man say. 'I cannot believe; I was not made to believe what I could not prove;' I reply, Do you

really say, 'It is not true,' because you have no proof? Ask yourself whether you do not turn from the idea because you prefer it should not be true. You accept a thousand things without proof, and a thousand things may be perfectly true, and have no proof. But if you cannot be sure, why therefore do you turn away? Is the thing assuredly false? Then you ought of course to turn away. Can you prove it false? You cannot. Again, why do you turn away? That a thing is not assuredly true cannot be reason for turning from it, else farewell to all theory and all scientific research! Is the thing less good, less desirable, less worth believing, in itself, that you cannot thus satisfy yourself concerning it? The very chance that *such* a thing may be true, the very fact that it cannot be disproved, is large reason for an honest, and continuous, and unending search. Do you hold any door in your nature open for the possibility of a God having a claim on you? The truth is, as I hinted before, that you are not drawn to the idea, do not like it; and it is therefore you turn away, and not because you have no proof.—If the man then shifted his ground and said, 'He seemed to me not a good being, and I said therefore, he *cannot* exist;' I should reply, There you were right. But a thing that cannot be, cannot render impossible a thing that can be—a thing against whose existence there are no such arguments as have rightly shown that the other cannot be. In right logical balance you must admit that a creative being who is good *may* exist. But the final question is always this: Have you acted, or rather, are you acting according to the conscience which is the one guide to truth, to all that is?"

"But," said Barbara, "perhaps the man would say that we see such suffering in the world, that the being who made it, if there be one, cannot possibly be both strong and good, otherwise he would not allow it."

"Say then, that he might be both strong and good, and have some reason for allowing, or even causing it, which those who suffer will themselves one day justify, ready for the sake of it to go through all the suffering again. Less than that would not satisfy me. If he say, 'What reason could justify the infliction of such suffering!' then tell him what I am now going to tell you.

"A year ago," continued Wingfold, "my little boy displeased me horribly. I will not tell you what he did: when the boy grows up, he will find it as impossible to understand how he could have done the thing, as I find it now. People say, 'Children will be children!' but I see little consolation in that. Children must be children, and ought to be good children. They are made to be good children, just as much as men are made to be good men. All I will say is, that he did a mean thing. You see his mother can hardly keep from crying now at the thought of it. Thank God, she was of one mind with me. I took him, and, bent on making him feel, if not how horrid the thing was in itself—for what imperfect being can ever know the full horror of evil! —at least how horrid I thought it, broke out in strong language. I told him I must whip him; that I could not bear doing it, but rather than he should be a damned, mean, contemptible little rascal, I would kill him and be hanged for it. I dare say it sounds very improper, but——"

"Not in the least!" cried Barbara. "I like a man

to curse what is bad, and go down on his knees to what is good."

"Well, what do you think the little fellow said?—'Don't kill me, papa,' he cried. 'I will be good. Don't, please, be hanged for my naughtiness! Whip me, and that will make me good.'"

"And then you couldn't do it?" asked Barbara, anxiously.

"I cried," said Wingfold, and almost cried again as he said it. "I'm not much in the habit of crying—I don't look like it, do I?—but I couldn't help it. The child took out his little pocket-handkerchief and dried my eyes, and then prepared himself for the whipping. And I whipped him as I never did before, and I hope in God shall never have to do again. The moment it was over, while my heart was like to burst, he flung his arms around my neck and began kissing me. 'I will never make you cry again, papa!' he said.—He has kept his word, and since then I have never wondered at the suffering in the world. I have puzzled my metaphysical brains to the last gasp about the origin of evil—I don't do that now, for I seem to understand it—but, since then, I have never troubled myself about the origin of suffering. I don't like pain a whit better than another, and I don't bear it nearly so well as Helen, but I vex neither my brain nor my heart as to God's sending it. I knew after whipping my boy, that the tears the Lord wept over Jerusalem were not wept by him only, but by the Father as well. Whoever says God cannot suffer, I say he does not understand. God *can* weep, and weeps more painful tears than ours; for he is God, and we are his little ones. That boy's

trouble was over with the punishment, but my heart is sore yet.

"It comes to this, that the suffering you see around you, hurts God more than it hurts you, or the man upon whom it falls; but he hates things that most men think little of, and will send any suffering upon them rather than have them continue indifferent to them. Men may say, 'We don't want suffering! we don't want to be good!' but God says, 'I know my own obligations! and you shall not be contemptible wretches, if there be any resource in the Godhead.' I know well that almost all the mothers in my congregation would, hearing what I have just told you, call me a cruel father. They would rather have me a weak one, loving my childless. They would rather their child should be foul in the soul than be made clean through suffering! I know they would! But I know also that they do not see how ugly is evil. And that again is because they are not clean enough themselves to value rightness above rubies! Tell the tale your own way to your workman-friend, and may God help him to understand it! The God who strikes, is the God whose son wept over Jerusalem."

"I am so glad you whipt the darling!" said Barbara, scarcely able to speak. "I shall love him more than ever."

"You should see how he loves his father!" said Helen. "His father is all his talk when we are alone together. He sees more of me than of him now, but by and by his father will take him about with him."

"And then," said Barbara, "all his talk will be of you!"

"Yes; it is the way of the child!"

"And of the whole family in heaven and earth," rejoined the parson.

Barbara rose.

"You'll be on the watch," said Wingfold, "for any chance for me of serving your mother?"

"I will," replied Barbara.

The next morning she got on Miss Brown, and rode to the forge, where Simon made her always welcome. It was sunshine to his heart to see her, he said. She knew that Richard was to be there. They left Miss Brown in the smithy, and went for a walk together, during which Barbara was careful to follow the parson's advice. Their talk was mostly about her life in New Zealand. Now that she knew God more, and believed more in him, she was more able to set forth her history. Feelings long vague had begun to put on shapes definite and communicable. She understood herself better, and was better able to make Richard understand her. And in Richard, by degrees, through the sympathy of affection, was growing the notion of a God in whom it would not be hard to believe. He ought not to believe, and he had not believed in the supposed being hitherto presented to him as God; now he saw the shape of a God in whom, if he existed, he ought to believe. But he had not yet come to long that he should exist, to desire him, or to cry out in the hope that he would hear him. His hour was not yet come. But when the day of darkness arrived, when he knew himself helpless, there would be in his mind a picture of the God to whom he must cry in his trouble—a God whose existence would then be his only need, the one desire of his soul. To wake the sense of this eternal need, present though unrecognized under every joy,

was the final cause of every sorrow and pain against which Richard rebelled—most naturally rebelled, knowing neither the plague of a heart that would but could not be lord over itself, nor of a nature hatefully imperfect and spotted, yea, capable of what itself could not but detest.

Naturally, his manners were growing more refined from his intercourse with the gracious, brave, sympathetic, unconventional creature, so strong yet so gentle, so capable of indignation, so full of love. He was gradually developing the pure humanity that lay beneath the rough artisan. He was, in a word, becoming what in the kingdom of heaven every man must be—a gentleman, because more than a gentleman.

All this time Barbara was pulled two ways: for Richard's sake she would have him heir to the baronetcy; for her own she would be rid of the shadow of having sought the baronet in the bookbinder. But more and more the asseveration of Lady Ann gained force with her—that Richard was not the heir. She had greatly doubted her, but now she said to herself: "She could hardly be mistaken, and she *cannot* have lied." The consequence was that she grew yet more free, more at home with Richard. She listened to all he had to tell her, learning of him with an *abandon* of willingness that put him upon his honor to learn of her again. And he did learn, as I have said, a good deal—went farther than he knew in the way of true learning.

They strolled together in the field behind the smithy, within sight of the cottage, for an hour or so; then hearing from the smithy the impatient stamping of Miss Brown, and fearing she might give

the old man trouble, hastened back. Richard brought out the mare. Barbara sprang on a big stone by the door, and mounted without his help. She went straight for Wylder Hall.

As they were walking up and down the field Arthur Lestrange passed on foot, saw them, and went home indignant.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LADY ANN MEDITATES.

It would have been difficult for Arthur himself to say whether in his heart rage or contempt was the stronger, when he saw the lady he loved walking in a field, turning and returning, in close talk with the bookbinder-fellow. Never had she so walked and talked with *him!* She preferred the bookbinder's society to his—and made it no secret that she did, for, although evidently desirous of having their interview uninterrupted, they walked in full view of the high road!

What did Barbara mean by it? He could not treat her as a child and lay the matter before Richard! If a lady showed favor to a man, the less worthy he was, the less could he be expected to see the unfitness of the thing. Besides, to acknowledge thus any human relation between Richard and either of them would be degrading. It was scorn alone that kept Arthur from hating Richard. For Barbara, he attributed her disregard of propriety, and the very possibility of her being interested in such a person, to the modes of life in the half savage country where she had been born and reared—*educated*, he remarked to himself, he could not say. But what did she mean by it? The worst of his torment was that the thought, unreasonable as it was, would yet come—that Richard was a good-looking fellow, and admiration, which in any English girl would have been

rendered impossible by his vulgarity, might have a share in her enjoyment of his shop-talk about books. The idea was simply disgusting!

What was he to do? What could any one do? The girl was absolutely uncontrolled: was it likely she would prove controllable? Would she mind him, when she cared no more for his stately mother than for the dairy-woman! How could such a bewitching creature so lack refinement? The more he thought, the more inexplicable and self-contradictory her conduct appeared. Such a jewelled-humming-bird to make friends with a grubbing rook! The smell of the leather, not to mention the paste and glue, would be enough for any properly sensitive girl! Universally fascinating, why did she not correspond all through? Brought out in London, she would be the belle of the season! If he did not secure her, some poor duke would pounce on her!

But again what was he to do? Must he bring scorn on himself by appearing jealous of a tradesman, or must he let the fellow go on casting his greasy shadow about the place? As to her being in love with him, that was preposterous! The notion was an insult! Yet half the attention she gave the bookbinder would be paradise to *him!* He *must* put a stop to it! he must send the man away! It would be a pity for the library! It was beginning to look beautiful, and would soon have been the most distinguished in the county: Lord Chough's was nothing to it! But there were other bookbinders as good as he! And what did the library matter! What did anything matter in such a difficulty!

She might take offence! She would be sure to suspect why the fellow was sent packing! She

would know she had the blame of ruining the library, and the bookbinder as well, and would never enter the house again! He must leave the thing alone—for the present! But he would be on his guard! Against, what, he did not plainly tell himself.

While the son was thus desiring a good riddance of the man he had brought into the house, and to whom Barbara was so much indebted, the mother was pondering the same thing. Should the man remain in the house or leave it? was the question with her also;—and if leave it, on what pretext? She was growing more and more uncomfortable at the possibilities. The possession of the estate by one born of another woman, and she of low origin; the subjection in which they would all be placed to him as the head of the family—a man used to the low ways of a trade, a man dirty and greasy, hardly in his right place at work in the library, the grandson of a blacksmith with brawny arms and smutty face—the ideas might well be painful to her!

Then first the thought struck her, that it must be his grandfather's doing that he was in the house! and there he was, at their very door, eager to bear testimony to the bookbinder as his grandson and heir to Mortgrange! Alas, the thing must be a fact, a horrible fact! All was over!—But she would do battle for her rights! She would not allow that the child was found! The thing was a conspiracy to supplant the true heir! How ruinous were the low tastes of gentlemen! If Sir Wilton had but kept to his own rank, and made a suitable match, nothing of all this misery would have befallen them! If her predecessor had been a lady, her son would have

been a gentleman, and there would have been nothing to complain of! To Lady Ann, her feeling had the force of a conviction, that the son of Robina Armour could not, in the nature of things divinely ordained, have the same rights as her son. Lady Ann's God was the head of the English aristocracy. There was nothing selfish that Lady Ann was not capable of wishing; there was nothing selfish she might not by degrees become capable of doing. She could not at that moment commit murder; neither could Lady Macbeth have done so when she was a girl. The absurd falsity of her notions as to her rights, came from lack of love to her neighbor, and consequent insensibility to his claims. At the same time she had not keen, she had only absorbing feelings of her rights; there was nothing *keen* in Lady Ann; neither sense not desire, neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow, neither love nor hate. Beyond her own order, beyond indeed her own circle in that order, the universe hardly existed. An age-long process of degeneration had been going on in her race, and she was the result; she was well born and well bred for feeling nothing. There is something fearful in the thought that through the generation the body may go on perfecting, while the heart goes on degenerating; that, while the animal beauty is growing complete in the magic of proportion, the indescribable marvel that can even give charm to ugliness, is as steadily vanishing. Such a woman, like Branca d'Oria in the Inferno, is already damned, and only seems to live. Lady Ann was indeed born capable of less than most; but had she attempted to do the little she could, she would not have been where she was; she would have been toiling up the

hill of truth, with a success to be measured, like the widow's mite, by what she had not.

All her thoughts were now occupied with the *rights* of her son, and through him of the family. Sir Wilton had been for some time ailing, and when he went, they would be at the mercy of any other heir than Arthur, just as miserably whether he were the true heir or an impostor: the one was as bad as the other from her point of view! For the right, Lady Ann cared nothing, except to have it or to avoid it. The law of the land was to be respected no doubt, but your own family—most of all when land was concerned—was worthier still!

It were better to rid the place of the bookbinder—but how? As to whether he was the legal heir or not, she would rather remain ignorant, only that, assured on the point, she would better understand how to deal with his pretension! But she could not consult Sir Wilton, because she suspected him of a lingering regard for the dead wife which would naturally influence his feeling for the live son—if live he were: no doubt he had enjoyed the company of the low-born woman more than hers, for she, a woman of society, knew what was right! She had reason therefore to fear him prejudiced for any pretender! Arthur and he got on quite as well as could be expected of father and son—their differences never came to much; but on the other hand Sir Wilton had a demoniacal pleasure in frustrating! To make a man he disliked furious was honey and nuts to Sir Wilton; and she knew a woman whose disappointment would be dearer to him than that of all his enemies together! It was better therefore that he

should have no hint, and especially from her, of what was in the air!

Lady Ann thought herself a good woman because she never felt interest enough to be spiteful like Sir Wilton; yet, very strangely, not knowing in herself what repentance meant, she judged him capable of doing her the wrong of atoning to his first wife for his neglect of her, by being good to her child!

Thinking over her talk with Barbara, she could not, after all, feel certain that Richard knew, or that he had incited Barbara to take his part. But in any case it was better to get rid of him! It was dangerous to have him in the house! He might be spending his nights in trumping up evidence! At any moment he might appeal to Sir Wilton as his father! But at the worst, he would be unable to prove the thing right off, and if her husband would but act like a man, they might impede the attempt beyond the possibility of its success!

One comfort was, that, she was all but confident, the child was not already baptized when stolen from Mortgrange; neither were such as would steal children likely to have them baptized; therefore the God who would not allow the unbaptized to lie in his part of the cemetery, would never favor his succession to the title and estate of Mortgrange! The fact must have its weight with Providence!—whom Lady Ann always regarded as a good churchman: he would never take the part of one that had not been baptized! Besides, the fellow was sure to turn out a socialist, or anarchist, or positivist, or radical, or something worse! She would dispute his identity to the last, and assert his imposture beyond it! Her

duty to society demanded that she should not give in!

Suddenly she remembered the description her husband had given her of the ugliness of the infant: this man was decidedly handsome! Then she remembered that Sir Wilton had told her of a membrane between certain of his fingers—horrible creature: she must examine the impostor!

Arthur was very moody at dinner; his mother feared some echo of the same report as caused her own anxiety had reached him, and took the first opportunity of questioning him. But neither of Lady Ann's sons had learned such faith in their mother as to tell her their troubles. Arthur would confess to none. She in her turn was far too prudent to disclose what was in her mind: the folly of his youth might take the turn of an unthinking generosity! the notion of an elder brother might even be welcome to him!

In another generation no questions would be asked! Many estates were in illegal possession! There was a claim superior to the legal! Theirs was a *moral* claim!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LADY ANN AND RICHARD.

THE same afternoon, Richard was mending the torn title of a black-letter copy of Fox's Book of Martyrs. Vixen had forgotten her former fright, and her evil courage had returned. Opening the door of the library so softly that Richard heard nothing, she stole up behind him, and gave his elbow a great push just as, with the sharpest of penknives, he was paring the edge of a piece of old paper, to patch the title. The penknife slid along the bit of glass he was paring upon, and cut his other hand. The blood spouted, and some of it fell upon the title, which made Richard angry: it was an irremediable catastrophe, for the paper was too weak to bear any washing. He laid hold of the child, meaning once more to carry her from the room, and secure the door. Then first Vixen saw what she had done, and was seized with horror—not because she had hurt "the bear," but because of the blood, the sight of which she could not endure. It was a hereditary weakness on Sir Wilton's side. One of the strongest men of his family used to faint at the least glimpse of blood. There was a tradition to account for it, not old or thin enough to cast no shadow, therefore seldom alluded to. It was not, therefore, an ordinary childish dismay, but a deep-seated congenital terror, that made Vixen give one wavering scream, and drop on the

floor. Richard thought she was pretending a faint in mockery of what she had done, but when he took her up, he saw that she was insensible. He laid her on a couch, rang the bell, and asked the man to take the child to her governess. The man saw blood on the child's dress, and when he reached the school-room with her, informed the governess that she had had an accident in the library. Miss Malliver, with one of her accomplished shrieks, dispatched him to tell Lady Ann. Coming to herself in a few minutes, Vixen told a confused story of how the bear had frightened her. Lady Ann, learning that the blood was not that of her child, came to the conclusion that Richard had played upon her peculiarity to get rid of her, for Vixen, incapable of truth, did not tell that she was herself the cause of the wound whence the blood had made its appearance. Miss Malliver, who would hardly have been sorry had Vixen's throat been cut, rose in wrath, and would have swooped down the stair upon Richard.

"Leave him to me, Malliver," said Lady Ann, and rising, went down the stair. But the moment she entered the library, and saw Richard's hand tied up in his handkerchief, she bethought herself of the happy chance of satisfaction as to whether or not he was web-fingered: the absence of the peculiarity would indeed prove nothing, but the presence of it would be a warning of the worst danger: he might have had it removed, but could not have contrived to put it there!

"What have you done to yourself, Mr. Tuke?" she said, making a motion to take the wounded hand, from which at the same time she shrank with inward disgust.

"Nothing of any consequence, my lady," answered Richard, who had risen, and stood before her. "I was using a very sharp knife, and it went into my hand. I hope Miss Victoria is better?"

"There is nothing much the matter with her," answered her ladyship. "The sight of blood always makes her faint."

"It is a horrid sight, my lady!" rejoined Richard, wondering at her ladyship's affability, and ready to meet any kindness. "When I was at school, I was terribly affected by it. One boy used to provoke me to fight him, and contrive that I should make his nose bleed—after which he could do what he liked with me. But I set myself to overcome the weakness, and succeeded."

Lady Ann listened in silence, too intent on his hands to remark at the moment how the fact he mentioned bore on the question that absorbed her.

"Would you mind showing me the wound?" she said. "I am something of a surgeon."

To her disappointment, he persisted that it was nothing. Because of the peculiarity she would gladly have missed in them, he did not like showing his hands. His mother had begged him not to meddle with the oddity until she gave her consent, promising a good reason for the request when the right time should arrive; but he was sensitive about it—probably from having been teased because of it. His comfort was, that a few slits of a sharp knife would make him like other people.

Lady Ann was foiled, therefore the more eager: why should the man be so unwilling to show his hands?

"Your work must be very interesting!" she said.

"I am fond of it, my lady," he answered. "If I had a fortune left me, I should find it hard to drop it. There is nothing like work—and books—for enjoying life!"

"I daresay you are right.—But go on with your work. I have heard so much about it from Miss Wylder that I should like to see you at it."

"I am sorry, my lady, but I shall be fit for next to nothing for a day or two because of this hand. I dare not attempt going on with what I am now doing."

"Is it so very painful? You ought to have it seen to. I will send for Mr. Hurst."

As she spoke, she turned to go to the bell. Richard had tried to interrupt her, but she would not listen. He now assured her that it was his work not his hand that he was thinking of; and said that, if Mr. Lestrange had no objection, he would take a short holiday.

"Then you would like to go home!" said her ladyship, thinking it would be so easy then to write and tell him not to come back—if only Arthur could be got to do it.

"I should like to go to my grandfather's for a few days," answered Richard.

This was by no means what Lady Ann desired, but she did not see how to oppose it.

"Well, perhaps you had better go," she said.

"If you please, my lady," rejoined Richard, "I must see Mr. Lestrange first. I cannot go without his permission."

"I will speak to my son about it," answered Lady Ann, and went away, feeling that Richard would be a dangerous enemy. She did not hate him; she

only regarded him as what might possibly prove an adverse force to be encountered and frustrated because of her family, and because of the right way of things—that those, namely, who had nothing should be kept from getting anything. In the meantime the only thing clear was, that he had better be got out of the neighborhood! It was well Sir Wilton had hardly seen the young man; if there was anything about him capable of rousing old memories, it were well it should not have the chance! Sir Wilton was not fond of books, and it could be no great pleasure to him to have the library set to rights; he was annoyed at being kept out of it, for he liked to smoke his cigar there, and shuddered at the presence of a working man except in the open air: she was certain he would feel nowise aggrieved if the design were abandoned midway! The only person she feared would oppose Tuke's departure was Arthur.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

RICHARD AND ARTHUR.

SHE went to find him, told him what had happened to the young man, and, feeling her way, proposed that he should go to his grandfather's for a few days. Arthur started. Send him where he and Barbara would be constantly meeting! Must he forever imagine them walking up and down that field, among the dandelions and daisies! He had discovered, he believed, all that was between them, but was not therewith satisfied: she had found out, he said to himself, that the fellow was an infidel, did not believe in God, or a resurrection—was so low that he did not care to live forever, and she was trying to convert him. Arthur would rather he remained unconverted than that *she* should be the means of converting him. Nor indeed would he be much injured by having the growth of such a faith as Arthur's prevented in him: Arthur prided himself in showing due respect to *the Deity* by allowing that he existed. But the fellow was too clever by half, he said, and would be much too much for her. Any theory wild enough would be attractive to her, who never cared a pinhead what the rest of the world believed! She had indeed a strong tendency to pantheism, for she expected the animals to rise again—a most unpleasant notion! Doubtless it was she that sought his company; a fellow like that *could* not presume to seek hers! He

was only laughing at her all the time! What could an animal like him care about the animals: he had not even a dog to love! He would *not* have him go to his grandfather's! he would a thousand times rather give up the library! There should be no more bookbinding at Mortgrange! He would send the books to London to him! It would he degrading to allow personal feeling to affect his behavior to such a fellow; he should have the work all the same, but not at Mortgrange!

So he answered his mother that he was rather tired of him, and thought they had had enough of him; the work seemed likely to be spun out *ad infinitum*, and this was a good opportunity for getting rid of him. He was sorry, for it was the best way for the books, but he could send them to him in London, and have them done there! The man, he understood, had been making himself disagreeable too, and he did not want to quarrel with him! He was a radical, and thought himself as good as anybody: it was much best to let him go. He had at first liked him, and had perhaps shown it more than was good for the fellow, so that he had come to presume upon it, setting it down to some merit in himself. Happily he had retained the right of putting an end to the engagement when he pleased!

This was far better than Lady Ann had expected. Arthur went at once to Richard, and speaking, as he thought, unconcernedly, told him they found it inconvenient to have the library used as a workshop any longer, and must make a change.

Richard was glad to hear it, thinking he meant to give him another room, and said he could work just as well anywhere else: he wanted only a dry room

with a fireplace! Arthur told him he had arranged for what would be more agreeable to both parties, namely, that he should do the work at home. It would cost more, but he was prepared for that. He might go as soon as he pleased, and they would arrange by letter how the books should be sent—so many at a time!

Richard spied something more under his dismissal than the affair with Miss Vixen; but he was too proud to ask for an explanation: Mr. Lestrange was in the right of their compact. He felt aggrieved notwithstanding, and was sorry to go away from the library. He would never again have the chance of restoring such a library! He did not once think of it from the point of gain: he could always make his living! It was to him a genuine pleasure to cause any worthy volume to look as it ought to look; and to make a whole straggling library of books, wasted and worn, put on the complexion, uniform, and discipline of a well-conditioned company of the host of heaven, was at least an honorable task! For what are books, I venture to say, but an army-corps of the Lord of hosts, at whose command are troops of all natures, after the various regions of his indwelling! Even the letter is something, for the dry bones of books are every hour coming alive to the reader in whose spirit is blowing the better spirit. Richard himself was one of such, though he did not yet know there was a better spirit. Then again, there were not a few of the books with which individually he was sorry to part. He had also had fine opportunity for study, of which he was making good use, and the loss of it troubled him. He had read some books he would hardly otherwise

have been able to read, and had largely extended his acquaintance with titles.

He was sorry too not to see more of Mr. Wingfold. He was a clergyman, it was true, but not the least like any other clergyman he had seen! Richard had indeed known nothing of any other clergyman out of the pulpit; and I fear most clergymen are less human, therefore less divine, in the pulpit than out of it! Many who out of the pulpit appear men, are in it little better than hawkers of old garments, the worse for their new patches. Of the forces in action for the renovation of the world, the sale of such old clothes is one of the least potent. They do, however, serve a little, I think, even as the rags of a Neapolitan for the olives of Italy, as a sort of manure for the young olives of the garden of God.

But his far worst sorrow was leaving Miss Wylder. That was a pain, a keen pain in his heart. For, that a woman is miles above him, as a star is above a marsh-light, is no reason why a man should not love her. Nay, is it not the best of reasons for loving her? The higher in soul, and the lowlier in position he is, the more imperative and unavoidable is it that he should love her; and the absence of any thought in the direction of marriage leaves but the wider room for the love infinite. In a man capable of loving in such fashion, there are no bounds to the possibilities, no limit to the growth of love. Richard thought his soul was full, but a live soul can never be full; it is always growing larger, and is always being filled.

"Like one that hath been stunned," he went about his preparations for departure.

"You will go by the first train in the morning," said Arthur, happening to meet him in the stable-

yard, whither Richard had gone to look if Miss Brown was in her usual stall. "I have told Robert to take you and your tools to the station in the spring-cart."

"Thank you, sir," returned Richard; "I shall not require the cart. I leave the house to-night, and shall send for my things to-morrow morning. I have them almost ready now."

"You cannot go to London to-night!"

"I am aware of that, sir."

"Then where are you going? I wish to know."

"That is my business, sir."

"You have no cause to show temper," said Arthur, coldly.

"I should not have shown it, sir, had you not presumed to give me orders after dismissing me," answered Richard.

"I have not dismissed you; I mean to employ you still, only in London instead of here," said Arthur.

"That is a matter for fresh arrangement with my father," rejoined Richard, and left him.

Arthur felt a shadow cross him—almost like fear: he had but driven Richard to his grandfather's and had made an enemy of him! Nor could he feel satisfied with himself; he could not get rid of the thought that what he had done was not quite the thing for a gentleman to do. His trouble was not that he had wronged Richard, but that he had wronged himself, had not acted like his ideal of himself. He did not think of what was right, but of what befitted a gentleman. Such a man is in danger of doing many things unbefitting a gentleman. For the measure of a gentleman is not a man's ideal of himself.

His uneasiness grew as day after day went by, and Barbara did not appear at Mortgrange. He was not

aware that Richard saw no more of her than himself. He knew that he was at his grandfather's; he had himself seen him at work at the anvil; but he did not know that the hope in which he lingered there was vain.

Richard waited a week, but no Barbara came to the smithy. He could not endure the thought of going away without seeing her once more. He must once thank her for what she had done for him! He must let her know why he had left Mortgrange.

He would go and say good-bye to the clergyman: from him he might hear something of her!

Wingfold caught sight of him approaching the house, and himself opened the door to him. Taking him to his study, he made him sit down, and offered him a pipe.

"Thank you, sir; I don't smoke," said Richard.

"Then don't learn. You are better without it," answered Wingfold, and put down his own pipe.

"I came," said Richard, "to thank you for your kindness to me, and to ask about Miss Wylder. Not having seen her for a long time, I was afraid she might be ill. I am going away."

There was a tremor in Richard's voice, of which he was not himself aware. Wingfold noted it, pitied the youth because of the fuel he had stored for suffering, and admired him for his straightforwardness.

"I am sorry to say you are not likely to see Miss Wylder," he answered. "Her mother is ill."

"I hardly thought to see her, sir. Is her mother very ill?"

"Yes, very ill," answered Wingfold.

"With anything infectious?"

"No. Her complaint is as little infectious as com-

plaint could be; it is just exhaustion—absolute prostration, mental and nervous. She is too weak to think, and can't even feed herself. I fear her daughter will be worn out waiting on her. She devotes herself to her mother with a spirit and energy I never but once knew equalled. She never seems tired, never out of spirits. I heard a lady say she couldn't have much feeling to look cheerful when her mother was in such a state; but the lady was stupid. She would wait on her own mother almost as devotedly as Miss Wylder, but with such a lugubrious countenance that her patient might well seek refuge from it in the grave. But it is no wonder she should be in good spirits: it is the first time in her life, she says, that she has been allowed to be of any use to her mother! Then she is not suffering pain, and that makes a great difference. But more than all, her mother has grown so tender to her, and so grateful, following her constantly about the room with her eyes, that the girl says she feels in a paradise of which her mother is the tutelar divinity, raying out bliss as she lies in bed! Also her father is kinder to her mother. Little signs of tenderness pass between them—a thing she has never known before! How could she be other than happy!—But what is this you tell me about going away? The library cannot be finished?"

Wingfold had dilated on the worth of Miss Wylder, and let Richard know of her happiness, out of genuine sympathy. He knew that, next to the worship of God, the true *worship* of a fellow-creature, in the old meaning of the word, is the most potent thing for deliverance.

"No, sir," answered Richard; "the library is left in mid-ocean of decay. I don't know why they have

dismissed me. The only thing clear is, that they want to be rid of me. What I have done I can't think. There is a little girl of the family——"

Here he told how Vixen had from the first behaved to him, and what things had happened in consequence, the last more particularly.

"But," he concluded, "I do not think it can be that. I *should* like to know what it is."

"Then wait," said Wingfold. "If we only wait long enough, every reason will come out. You know I believe we are not going to stop, but are meant to go on and on forever; and I believe the business of eternity is to bring grand hidden things out into the light; and with them will come of necessity many other things as well, even some, I daresay, that we count trifles.—But I am sorry you're going."

"I don't see why you should be, sir!" answered Richard, his look taking from the words their seeming rudeness.

"Because I like you, and feel sure we should understand each other if only we had time," replied the parson. "It's a grand thing to come upon one who knows what you mean. It's so much of heaven before you get there.—If you think I'm talking shop, I can't help it—and I don't care, so long as you believe I mean it. I would not have you think it the Reverend Thomas and not Thomas himself that was saying it."

"I should never say you talked shop, sir; and I don't think you would say I was talking shop if I expatiated on the beauties of a Grolier binding! You would see I was not talking from love of gain, but love of beauty!"

"Thank you. You are a fair man, and that is

even more than an honest man! I don't speak from love of religion; I don't know that I do love religion."

"I don't understand you now, sir."

"Look here: I am very fond of a well-bound book; I should like all my new books bound in levant morocco; but I don't *care* about it; I could do well enough without any binding at all."

"Of course you could, sir! and so could I, or any man that cared for the books themselves."

"Very well! I don't care about religion much, but I could not live without my Father in heaven. I don't believe anybody can live without Him."

"I see," said Richard.

He thought he saw, but he did not see, and could not help smiling in his heart as he said to himself, "*I* have lived a good many years without Him!"

Wingfold saw the shadow of the smile, and blamed himself for having spoken too soon.

"When do you go?" he asked.

"I think I shall go to-morrow. I am at my grandfather's."

"If I can be of use to you, let me know."

"I will, sir; and I thank you heartily. There's nothing a man is so grateful for as friendliness."

"The obligation is mutual," said Wingfold.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR., MRS., AND MISS WYLDER.

A NEW experience had come to Mrs. Wylder. Her passion over the death of her son; her constant and prolonged contention with her husband; her protest against him whom she called the Almighty; the public consequence of the same; these, and the reaction from all these, had resulted in a sudden sinking of the vital forces, so that she who had been like a burning fiery furnace, was now like a heap of cooling ashes on a hearth, with the daylight coming in. She had not only never known what illness was, she did not even know what it was to feel unfit. Her consciousness of health was so clear, so unmixed, so unencountered, that she had never had a conception, a thought, a notion of what even that health was. Power and strength had so constantly seemed part of her known self, that she never thought of them; they were never far enough from her to be seen by her; she did not suspect them as other than herself, or dream that they could be disjoined from her. She could think only in the person of a strong woman; she was aware only of the being of a strong woman. Even after she had been some time helpless in bed, as often as she thought of anything she would like to do, it was the act of trying to get up and do it, that made her aware afresh that she was no more the woman corresponding to her consciousness of herself. For her consciousness had never

yet presented her as she really was, but always through the conditional and non-essential, so that by accidents only was she characterized to herself. Now she was too feeble even to care for the loss of her strength; her weakness went too deep to be felt as an oppression, for it met with no antagonism. Her inability to move was now no prison, and her attendant was no slave with tardy feet, but an angel of God.

For her Bab was now the mother's one delight. Her love for her lost twin had been in great part favoritism, partisanship, defence, opposition; her love for Barbara was all tenderness and no pride. In her self-lack she clung to her—as lordly dame, who had taken her castle for part of herself, and impregnable, but, its walls crumbling under the shot of the enemy, found herself defenceless before her captors, might turn and clasp her little maid, suppliant for protection. Good is it that we are not what we seem to ourselves "in our hours of ease," for then we should never seek the Father! The loss of all that the world counts *first things* is a thousandfold repaid in the mere waking to higher need. It proves the presence of the divine in the lower good, that its loss is so potent. A man may send his gaze over the clear heaven, and suspect no God; when the stifling cloud comes down, folds itself about him, shuts from him the expanse of the universe, he begins to long for a hand, a sign, some shadow of presence. Mrs. Wylder had not got so far as this yet, but she had sought refuge in love; and what is the love of child, or mother, or dog, but the love of God, shining through another being—which is a being just because he shines through it. This was

the one important result of her illness, that, finding refuge in the love of her daughter, she loved her daughter. The next point in her eternal growth would be to love the God who made the child she loved, and whose love shone upon her through the child. By nature she was a strong woman whom passion made weak. It sucked at her will till first it hardened it to a more selfish determination, then pulped it to a helpless obstinacy. The persistence that goes with inclination has its force only from the weakness of pride and the mean worship of self; it is the opposite of that free will which is the reflex of the divine will, and the ministering servant-power to all freedom, which resists and subdues the self of inclination, and is obedient only to the self of duty. Where the temple of God has no windows, earthquake must rend the roof, that the sunlight may enter. Barbara's mother lay broken on her couch that the spirit of the daughter might enter the soul of her mother—and with it the spirit of him who, in the heart of her daughter, made her that which she was.

Her illness had lasted a month, when one day her husband, at Barbara's prayer, coming to see her, she feebly put out her hand asking for his, and for a moment the divine child in the man opened its heavenly eyes. He took the offered hand kindly, faltered a gentle-sounding commonplace or two, and left her happier, with a strange little bird fluttering in his own bosom. There are eggs of all the heavenly birds in our bosoms, and the history of man is the incubation and hatching of these eggs.

She began to recover, but the recovery was a long one. As soon as she thought her well enough, Bar-

bara told her that Mr. Wingfold had been to inquire after her almost every day, and asked whether she would not like to see him. Mrs. Wylder was in a quiescent condition, non-combatant, involving no real betterment, occasioned only by the absence of impulse. But such a condition gives opportunity for the good, the gentle, the loving, to be felt, and so recognized. The sufferer resembles a child that has not been tempted, whose trial is yet to come. With recovery, fresh claim will be put in by the powers of good. This claim will be resisted by old habit, resuming its force in the return of physical and psychical health,—and then comes the tug of war. For no one can be saved, as he who knows his master would be saved, without the will being supreme in the matter, without the choosing to fulfil all righteousness, to resist the wrong, to do the right. Wingfold never built much on bed-repentance. The aphorism of the devil sick and the devil well is only too true. But he welcomed the fresh opportunity for a beginning. He knew that pain and sickness do rub some dirt from the windows toward the infinite, and that things of the old unknown world whence we came, do sometimes look in at them, a moment now, and a moment then, waking new old things that lie in every child born into the world. I seem to see the great marshes where the souls go wandering about after the bog-fires; a kiss blown from the walls of the city comes wavering down among them; it flits hither and thither with the dead-lights; it finds a soul with a spot on which it can alight; it settles there, and kisses it alive. God is the God of patience, and waits and waits for the child who keeps him waiting and will not open the door.

Wingfold went to see her, but took good care to press nothing upon her. He let her give him the lead. She spoke of her weakness, and the parson drew out her moan. She praised her Barbara, and the parson praised her again in words that opened the mother's eyes to new beauties in her daughter. She mentioned her weariness, and the parson spoke of the fields and the soft wind and the yellow shine of the buttercups in the grass. Her heart was gently drawn to the man whose eyes were so keen, whose voice was so mellow and strong, and whose words were so lovely sweet, saying the things that were in her own heart, but would not come out.

One day he proposed to read something, and she consented. I will not say what he read, for I would avoid waking controversy as to fitness. He thought he knew what he was about. The good in a *true* book, he would say, is the best protection against what may not be so good in it; its wrong as well as its right may wake the conscience: the thoughts of a book accuse and excuse one another. In saying so, he took the true reader for granted; to an untrue reader the truth itself is untrue. The general sense of honor, he would say, has been stimulated not a little by the story of the treachery of Jael. Nor was it any wonder he should succeed in interesting Mrs. Wylder, for she had a strong brain as well as a big heart. More than half her faults came of an indignant sense of wrong. She had passionately loved her husband once, but he had soon ceased even the show of returning her affection,

> And to be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain.

After a fierce struggle against the lessons life

would have her taught, a struggle continued to her fortieth year, she was now at length a pupil in another school, where the schoolroom was her bed, the book of Quiet her first study, her two attendants a clergyman and her own daughter, and her one teacher God himself. In that schoolroom, the world began to open to her a little. Among men who could, without seeming to aim at it, make another think, I have not met the equal of Wingfold. His mode was that of the open-hearted apostle, who took men by guile. He called out the thoughts lurking in their souls, and set them dealing with those thoughts, not with him: they were slow to discover that he was a divine musician, playing upon the holy strings of their hearts; they thought the tunes came alive in their own air—as indeed they did, only another hand woke them. To work thus, he had to lay bare not a little of his own feeling, but where it was brotherly to show feeling, he counted it unchristian to hide it. Feeling by itself, however, that came and went without correspondent action, he counted not only weak and mawkish, but tending to the devilish.

Barbara was happy all day long. Life seemed about to blossom into great flowers of scarlet and gold. She had learned from the parson that the bookbinder was gone, but was at the time too busy and too anxious to question him as to the cause of his going. Till her mother was well, it was enough to know that Richard had wanted to see her, doubtless to tell her all about it. She often thought of him, what he had done for her, and what she had tried to do for him, and was certain he would one day believe in God. She did not suspect any quarrel with the people at Mortgrange. She thought perhaps the

secret concerning him had come out, and he did not choose to remain in a house the head of which, if Lady Ann's tale was true, had so bitterly wronged his mother. As soon as she was able she would go and hear of him from his grandfather! There was no hurry! She would certainly see him again before long! And he would be sure to write! It did not occur to her that a man in his position would hardly venture to approach her again, without some renewed approach on her part; and for a long time she was nowise uneasy.

The hope alive in Wingfold made him a true consoler; and the very sight of him was a strength to Barbara. She regarded him with profound reverence, and his wife as most enviable of women: could she not learn from his mouth the rights of a thing, the instant she opened hers to ask them? Barbara did not know how much the sympathy, directness, and clear common sense of Helen had helped to keep awake, support, and nourish the insight of her husband. She did not know, good and powerful as Wingfold must have been had he never married, how much wiser, more useful, and more aspiring he had grown because Helen was Helen, and his wife, sent as certainly as ever angel in the old time. The one fault she had in the eyes of her husband was, that she was so indignant with affectation or humbug of any sort, as hardly to give the better thing that might coexist with it, the needful chance.

So long as evil comes to the front, it appears an interminable, unconquerable thing. But all the time there may be a change, positive as inexplicable, at the very door. How is it that a child begins to be good? Upon what fulcrum rests the knife-edge of

alteration? As undistinguishable is the moment in which the turn takes place; equally perplexing to keenest investigation the part of the being in which the renovation commences. Who shall analyze repentance, as a force, or as a phenomenon! You cannot see it coming! Before you know, there it is, and the man is no more what he was; his life is upon other lines! The wind hath blown. We saw not whence it came, or whither it went, but the new birth is there. It began in the spiritual infinitesimal, where all beginnings are. The change was begun in Mrs. Wylder. But the tug of her war was to come.

Lady Ann had not once been to see her since first calling when she arrived. Naturally she did not take to her. In the eyes of Lady Ann, Mrs. Wylder was insufferable—a vulgar, arrogant, fierce woman, purse-proud and ignorant. But a keen moral eye would have perceived Lady Ann vastly inferior to Mrs. Wylder in everything right-womanly. Lady Ann was the superior by the changeless dignity of her carriage, but her self-assured pre-eminence was offensive, and her drawling deliberation far more objectionable than Mrs. Wylder's abrupt movements, or the rough and ready speech that accompanied her eager dart at the gist of a matter. Even the look that would kill a man if it could, never roused such hate as sprang to meet the icy stare of her passionless ladyship. Many a man with no admiration of the florid, would have sought refuge in Mrs. Wylder's plump face, vivid with an irritable humanity, from the moveless pallor of Lady Ann's delicately formed cheek, and the pinched thinness of her fine, poverty-stricken nose. Oh, those pinched nostrils, the very outcry of inward meanness! will they ever open to

the full tide of a surging breath? What vital interweaving of gladness and grief will at length make strong and brave and unselfish the heart that sent out those nostrils! Less than a divine shame will never make it the heart of a fearless, bountiful, redeeming woman.

Mrs. Wylder was nowise annoyed that Lady Ann did not call a second time. She did not care enough to mind, and preferred not seeing her. They had in common as near nothing as humanity permitted. "Stuckup kangaroo?" she called her.

"I'll lay you my best sapphire," she said to her daughter, in the hearing of Wingfold, whose presence she had forgotten, "that for the last three hundred years not a woman of her family has suckled her own young!"

Neither mother nor daughter had shown the least deference to Lady Ann's exalted position. The first movement of her dislike to Mrs. Wylder was caused by her laughing and talking as unrestrainedly in her presence as in that of the doctor's wife, who happened to be in the room when Lady Ann entered. But now that danger, not to say ruin, appeared in the distance, she must, for the sake of her son, wronged by his father's having married another woman before his mother, neglect no chance! Arthur had been to Wylder Hall repeatedly, but Barbara had not seen him! She must go herself and pay some court to the young heiress! She was anxious also to learn whether any chagrin was concerned in her continuous absence from Mortgrange.

Barbara received her heartily, and they talked a little, Lady Ann imagining herself very pleasing: she rarely condescended to make herself agreeable,

and measured her success by her exertion. She found Barbara in such good spirits that she pronounced her heartless—not to her son, or to any but herself, who would not have come near her but for the money to be got with her. She begged her, notwithstanding, for the sake of her complexion, to leave her mother an hour or two now and then, and ride over to Mortgrange. Incessant watching would injure her health, and health was essential to beauty! Barbara protested that nothing ever hurt her; that she was the only person she knew fit to be a nurse, because she was never ill. When her Ladyship, for once oblivious of her manners, grew importunate, Barbara flatly refused.

"You must pardon me, Lady Ann," she said; "I cannot, and I will not leave my mother."

Then Lady Ann thought it might be wise to make a little more of the mother to whom she seemed so devoted. She had imagined the daughter of the coarse woman must feel toward her as she did, and suspected a coarser grain in the daughter than she had supposed, because she was not disgusted with her mother. She did not know that eyes of love see the true being where other eyes see only its shadow; and shadows differ a good deal from their bodies.

But meeting Mr. Wylder in the avenue as she returned, and stopping her carriage to speak to him, Lady Ann changed her mind, and resolved to curry favor with the husband instead of the wife. For hitherto she had scarcely seen Mr. Wylder, and knew about him only by unfavorable hearsay; but she was charmed with him now, and drew from him a promise to go and dine at Mortgrange.

Bab went singing back to her mother, who was

never so ill that she did not like to hear her voice. She could not always bear it in the room, but outside she was never tired of it. So Bab went about the house singing like a mavis. But she never passed a servant, male or female, without ceasing her song to say a kind word; and her mother, who, now that she had got on a little, lay listening with her keenest of ears, knew by the checks and changes of Bab's song, something of what was going on in the house. If one asked Bab what made her so happy, she would answer that she had nothing to make her unhappy; and there was more philosophy in the answer than may at first appear. For certainly the normal condition of humanity is happiness, and the thing that should be enough to make us happy is simply the absence of anything to make us unhappy.

"Everything," she would answer another time, "is making me happy."

"I think I *am* happiness," she said once.

How could she *naturally* be other than happy, seeing she came of happiness! "Il lieto fattore," says Dante; "whose happy-making sight," says Milton.

Mr. Wylder went and dined with Sir Wilton and Lady Ann. The latter did her poor best to please him, and was successful. It had always been an annoyance to Mr. Wylder that his wife was not a lady. In the bush he did not feel it; but now he saw, as well as knew, wherein she was inferior, and did not see wherein she excelled. It was the more consolation to him that Lady Ann praised his daughter, her beauty, her manners, her wit—praised her for everything, in short, that she thought hers, and for some things she thought were not hers. But she hinted that it would be of the greatest benefit to

Barbara to have the next season in London. The girl had met nobody, and might, in her ignorance and innocence, being such an eager, impetuous, warm-hearted creature, with her powers of discrimination of course but little cultivated, make unsuitable friendships that would lead to entanglement; while, well chaperoned, she might become one of the first ladies in the county. She took care to let her father know at the same time, or think he knew, that, although her son would be only a baronet, he would be rich, for the estates were in excellent condition and free of encumbrance; and hinted that there was now a fine chance of enlarging the property, neighboring land being in the market at a low price.

Mr. Wylder had indeed hoped for a higher match, but Lady Ann, being an earl's daughter, had influence with him. The remaining twin was so delicate that it was very doubtful if he would succeed: if he did not, and land could be had between to connect the two properties of Mortgrange and Wylder, the estate would be far the finest in the county; when, as Lady Ann hinted, means might be used to draw down the favor of Providence in the form of a patent of nobility.

To Lady Ann, London was the centre of love-making, and Arthur, she said to herself, would show to better advantage there than in the country. The place where she had herself been nearest to falling in love, was a ball-room: the heat apparently had half thawed her.

Mr. Wylder thought Lady Ann was right, and the best thing for Barbara would be to go to London: Lady Ann would present her at court, and she would doubtless be the belle of the season. Her chance

would be none the worse of making a better match than with Arthur Lestrange.

It may seem odd that a like reflection did not occur to Lady Ann: far more eligible men than her son might well be drawn to such a bit of sunshine as Barbara; but just what in Barbara was most attractive, Lady Ann was least capable of appreciating.

CHAPTER XL.

IN LONDON.

It was into the first of the London fogs of the season that Richard, after a slow parliamentary journey, got out of his third class carriage, at the great dim station. He took his portmanteau in one hand and his bag of tools in the other, and went to look for an omnibus. How terribly dull the streets were! and how terribly dull and commonplace all inside him! Into the far dark, the splendor of life, Barbara, had vanished! Various memories of her, now this look, now that, now this attire, now that—a certain button half torn from her riding habit—the feeling of her foot in his hand as he lifted her to Miss Brown's back—would enter his heart like the proclamation of a queen on a progress through her dominions. The way she drove the nails into her mare's hoof; the way she would put her hand on his shoulder as she slid from the saddle; the commanding love with which she spoke to the great animal, and the way Miss Brown received it; the sweet coaxing respect she showed his blacksmith-grandfather; the tone of her voice when she said *God*;—a thousand attendant shadows glided in her queen procession, one after the other in single file, through his brain, and his heart, and his every power. He forgot the omnibus, and went tramping through the dreary streets with his portmanteau and a small bag of tools—he

had sent home his heavier things before—thinking ever of Barbara, and not scorning himself for thinking of her, for he thought of her as true lady herself would never scorn to be thought of by honest man. No genuine unselfish feeling is to be despised either by its subject or its object. That Barbara was lovely was no reason why Richard should not love her! that she was rich was no reason why he should forget her! She came into his life as a star ascends above the horizon of the world: the world cannot say to it, "Go down, star." Yea, Richard's star raised him as she rose. In her presence he was at once rebuked and uplifted. She was a power within him. He could not believe in God, but neither could he think belief in such a God as she believed in degrading. He said to himself that everything depended on the kind of God believed in; and that the kind of God depended on the kind of woman. He wondered how many ideas of God there might be, for every one who believed in him must have a different idea. "Some of them must be nearer right than others!" he said to himself—nor perceived that he was beginning to entertain the notion of a real God. For he saw that the notions of the best men and women must be convergent, and was not far from thinking that such lines must point to some object, rather than an empty centre: the idea of the best men and women must be a believable idea, might be a true idea, might therefore be a real existence. He had not yet come to consider the fact, that the best of men said he knew God; that God was like himself, only greater; that whoever would do what he told him should know that God, and know that he spoke the truth concerning him; that

he had come from him to witness of him that he was truth and love. Richard had indeed started on a path pointing thitherward, but as yet all concerning the one necessary entity was vaguest speculation with him. He did feel, however, that to give in to Barbara altogether would not make him a believer such as Barbara. On the other hand, he was yet far from perceiving that no man is a believer, let him give his body to be burned, except he give his will, his life to the Master. No man is a believer with whom he and his Father are not first; no man, in a word, who does not obey him, that is, who does not do what he said, and says. It seems preposterous that such definition should be necessary; but thousands talk about him for one that believes in him; thousands will do what the priests and scribes say he commands, for one who will search to find what he says that he may do it—who will take his orders from the Lord himself, and not from other men claiming either knowledge or authority. A man must come up to the Master, hearken to his word, and do as he says. Then he will come to know God, and to know that he knows him.

When he stopped thinking of Barbara, all was dreary about Richard. But he did not once say to himself, "She does not love me!" did not once ask, "Does she love me?" He said, "She cares for me; she is good to me! I wish I believed as she does that I might hope to meet her again in the house of the one Father!"

It was Saturday night, and he had to go through a weekly market, a hurrying, pushing, loitering, jostling crowd, gathered thick about the butchers' and fishmongers' shops, the greengrocers' barrows, and

the trays upon wheels with things laid out for sale. Suddenly a face flashed upon him, and disappeared. He was not sure that it was Alice's, but it suggested Alice so strongly that he turned and tried to overtake it. Impeded by his luggage, however, which caught upon hundreds of legs, he soon saw the attempt hopeless. Then with pain he remembered that he had not her address, and did not know how to communicate with her. He longed to learn why she had left him without a word, what her repeated avoidance of him meant; far more he desired to know where she was that he might help her, and how she fared. But Barbara was her friend! Barbara knew her address! He would ask her to send it him! He hardly thought she would, for she was in the secret of Alice's behavior, but joy to think, it would be a reason for writing to her! His heart gave a bound in his bosom. Who could tell but she might please to send him the fan-wind of a letter now and then, keeping the door, just a chink of it, open between them, that the voice of her slave might reach her on the throne of her loveliness. He walked the rest of the way with a gladder heart; he was no longer without a future; there was something to do, and something to wait for! Days are dreary unto death which wrap no hope in their misty folds.

His uncle and aunt received him with more warmth than he had ever known them show. They were in good spirits about him, for they had all the time been receiving news of him and Barbara, with not a word of Alice, from old Simon. Jane's heart swelled with the ambition that her boy should as a working-man gain the love of a well-born girl, and reward her by making her *my lady*.

I do not think Mrs. Tuke could have loved a son of her own body more than this son of her sister; but she was constantly haunted with a vague uneasiness about the possible consequences to herself and her husband of what she had done, and the obstacles that might rise to prevent his restoration; and this uneasiness had its share both in repressing the show of her love, and in making her go to church so regularly. Her pleasure in going was not great, but she was not the less troubled that Richard did not care about going. She was still in the land of bullocks and goats; she went to church with the idea that she was doing something for God in going. It is always the way. Until a man knows God, he seeks to obey him by doing things he neither commands nor cares about; while the things for the sake of which he sent his son, the man regards as of little or no consequence. What the son says about them he takes as a matter of course for him to say, and for himself to neglect.

Mrs. Tuke noted, the next day, that, as often almost as he was still, a shadow settled on Richard's face, and he looked lost and sad; but it only occurred to her that of course he must miss Barbara, never that he cherished no hope such as she would have counted hope. She took it almost as an omen of final success when in the evening he asked her if she would not like him to go to church with her. He felt as if in church he would be nearer Barbara, for he knew that now she went often. But alas, while there he sat, he felt himself drifting farther and farther from her! The foolish utterances of the parson made him deeply regret that he had gone. While he believed, or at least was willing to believe, that they misrep-

resented Christianity, they awoke all his old feelings of instinctive repulsion, and overclouded his discrimination. Almost as little could he endure the unnature as the untruth of what he heard. It had no ring of reality, no spark of divine fire, no appealing radiance of common sense, little of any verity at all. There was in it, as nearly as possible, nothing at all to mediate between mind and mind, between truth and belief, between God and his children. The clergyman was not a hypocrite—far from it! He was in some measure even a devout man. But in his whole presentation of God and our relation to him, there was neither thought nor phrase germane to sunrise or sunset, to the firmament or the wind or the grass or the trees; nothing that came to the human soul as having a reality true as that of the world but higher; as holding with the life lived in it, with the hopes and necessities of the heart and mind. If "the hope of the glory of God" must be fashioned in like sort, then were the whole affair of creation and redemption both dull and desperate. There was no glow, no enthusiasm in the man—neither could there be, with the notions he held. His God suggested a police magistrate—and not a just one.

Richard would gladly have left the place, and wandered up and down in the drizzle until, the service over, his mother should appear; but for her sake he sat out the misery.

"The man," he said to himself, "does not give us one peg on which to hang the love of God that he tells us we ought to feel! Love a God like that! If he were as good as my mother, I would love him! But we have all to look out to protect ourselves from him! Mr. Parson, there's no such being as you

jabber about! It puzzles me to think what my mother gets from you!"

He had written his letter to Barbara, and when they came out he posted it. A long, long time of waiting followed; but no waiting brought any answer. Lady Ann had dropped a hint, and Mr. Wylder had picked it up, a hint delicate, but forcible enough to make him do what he had never done before—keep an outlook on the letters that came for his daughter. When Richard's arrived, it did not look to him that of a gentleman. The writing was good, but precise; it was sealed with red wax, but the impression was sunk: a proper seal had not been used! Especially where his own family was concerned, Mr. Wylder was not the most delicate of men: he opened the letter, and in it found what he called a rigmarole of poetry and theology! "Confound the fellow!" he said to himself. Lady Ann did well to warn him! There should be no more of this! The scatterbrain took after her mother! He would give it her hot!

But he neither gave it her hot, nor gave her the letter; he did not say a word. He feared the little girl he pretended to protect, and knew that if he entered the lists with her, she would be too much for him. But he did not understand that the mean in him dared not confront the noble in his child. So Richard's letter only had it hot; it went into the fire, and Bab never read the petition of her poor friend.

The next morning Richard went to the shop, and fell to the first job that came to his hand. He acquainted his father with Lestrange's proposal in regard to the library: Mr. Tuke would have him accept it.

"You shall have all it brings," he said.

"I don't want the money!" returned Richard.

"But I want the honor of the thing," replied his uncle. "You answered the young gentleman sharply: you had better let me write!"

Richard made no objection. He would gladly keep the door open to any place where the shadow of Barbara might fall, and was willing therefore to pocket the offence of his causeless dismissal. But no notice was taken of Tuke's letter, and a gulf of negation seemed to yawn between the houses.

Thus was initiated a dreary time for Richard. Now first he began to know what unhappiness was. The seeming loveless weather that hung over the earth and filled the air, was in joyless harmony with his feelings. But had his trouble fallen in a more genial season, it would have been worse. He had never been with Barbara in the winter, and it did not seem so unnatural to be without her now. Had it been summer, all the forms of earth and air would have brought to him the face and voice and motion of Barbara; and yet the soul would have been gone from them. The world would have been worse dead then than now in the winter. Barbara had been the soul of it—more than a sun to it.

He could not, however, dead as the world seemed, remain a moment indoors after his work was done. Whatever sort the weather, out he must go, often on the Thames, heedless of cold or wind or rain. His mother grew anxious about him, attributed his unrest to despair, and feared she might have to tell him her secret. She recoiled from setting free what she had kept in prison for so many years. In her own mind she had settled his coming of age as the term of his humiliation, and she would gladly keep to it. She

shrunk from losing him, from breaking up the happiness that lay in seeing him about the house. But that her husband had insisted on accustoming themselves to live without him, she would hardly have consented to his late absence. She shrunk also from the measures necessary to reinstate him, and from the commotion those measures must occasion. It was so much easier to go on as they were doing! and delay could not prejudice his right! In fact, most of the things that made her take the baby, were present still, making her desire to keep the youth. A day would come when she must part with him, but that day was not yet! She dreaded uncaging her secret, because of the change it must work, whether immediate action were taken or not. She never suspected that anyone knew or surmised it but herself, or that she had to beware of any tongue but her own,

Her husband left the matter entirely to her. It was her business, he said, from the first, and he would let it be hers to the last.

CHAPTER XLI.

NATURE AND SUPERNATURE.

But Richard soon began to recover both from the separation and from his disappointment in regard to his letter. He was satisfied that whatever might be the cause of her silence, it came from no fault in Barbara. Nothing ever shook his faith in her.

And soon he found that he looked now upon the world with eyes from which a veil had been withdrawn. Barbara gone, mother Earth came nigh to comfort her child. He had always delighted in the beauty of the world—in what shows of earth and air were to be seen in London. The sunset that filled as with a glowing curtain the end of some street where he walked, would go on glowing in his heart when it left the street. Even in winter he would now and then go out to see the sunrise, and see it; and from the street might now and then, at rare times, be beheld a dappling and streaking, a mottling and massing of clouds on the blue. The fog of the London valley, and the smoke of the London chimneys, did not *always*, any more than the cares and sorrows and sins of its souls, blot out its heaven as if it had never looked on the earth. But he had learned much since he went to the country; he had gone nearer to Nature, and seen that in her lap she carried many more things than he knew of; and now that Barbara was gone, the memories of Nature came nearer to

him: he remembered her and was glad. Soon he began to find that, both as regards Nature and those whom we love, absence is, for very nearness, often better than presence itself. He had been used to think and talk of Nature either as an abstraction, or as the personification of a force that knew nothing, and cared for nothing, was nobody, was nothing; now it gradually came to him, and gained upon him ere he knew, first that the things about him wore meanings, and held them up to him, then that something was thinking, something was meaning the things themselves, and so moving thoughts in him, that came and went unforeseen, unbidden. Thoughts clothed in things were everywhere about him, over his head, under his feet, and in his heart; and as often as anything brought him pleasure, either through memory or in present vision, it brought Barbara too; and she seemed their maker, when she was but one of the fair company, the lady of the land. Everything beautiful turned his face to the more beautiful, more precious, diviner Barbara. With each new sense of loveliness, she floated up from where she lay, ever ready to rise, in the ocean of his heart. She was the dweller of his everywhere!

He knew that Barbara did not make these things; it only seemed as if she made them because she was the better joy of them: did not the fact show how the fiction of a God might have sprung up in the minds that had no Barbara to look like the maker of the loveliness? But Barbara was there already, known and loved. The mind did not invent Barbara. And again, why should the mind want any one to look like a maker, an indweller, an *ingeniuer*—to use a word of Shakspere's invention? Yet again, why

should the thought of Barbara *suggest* a soul, that is, a causing, informing presence, to these things? Was there a meaning in them? How did they come to have that meaning? Could it be that, having come out of nothing—the mind of man, and all the things, out of the same nothing, they responded enough to each other for the man to find his own reflex wherever he pleased to look for it? Only, if man and Nature came both out of nothing, why should they not be nothing to each other? why should not man be nothing to himself? As it was, one nothing, having no thought, meant the same the other nothing meant, having thought!—and hence came all the beauty of the world! And once again, if these things meant nothing but what the mind put into them—its own thought, namely, of them—they did not really mean anything, they were only imagined to mean it; and why should he, if but for a moment, imagine Barbara at the root of nothing? And why should he not, seeing she was herself nothing? Or was he to consent to be fooled, and act as if there was something where he knew there was nothing?

The truth of Richard's love appeared in this, that he was more able now to see the other side of a thing, to start objection to his own idea from the side of one who thought differently.

"If I feel," he would say to himself, "as if these things meant something, and conclude that they only mean *me*, being the body to me, who am the soul of them; and still more if I conclude that the sum of them is the blind cause of me; then, when I grow sick of myself, finding no comfort, no stay in myself for myself, and know that I need another, say, *another self*, then the seeming sympathy that Nature

offers me is the merest mockery! It is only my own self—my self gone behind and peeping round a corner, grinning back sympathy at me from its sickening death-mask! Why should man need another if he came from nothing? But he came from a father and mother: man needed the woman: will not that explain the thing? No; for even the relation itself needs to be comforted and sustained and defended!"

Why was there so much, and most of all in himself, for which, as Richard was beginning to understand, even a Barbara could not suffice? Why also did her sufficiency depend so much on her faith in an all-sufficient? And why was there so often such a gulf betwixt the two that seemed made for each other? Ah! they were made for each other only in the general! For the individual, Nature did not care; she had no time! Then how was it that he cared for Nature? If Nature meant anything, was an intelligence, a sort of God, why should he, the individual, who loved as an individual, was a blessing or curse to himself as an individual—why should he care anything for one who loved only in the general? Could a man love in general? Yes; he himself loved his kind and sought to deliver them from superstition. But that was because he could think of them as a multitude of individuals. If he had never loved father, mother, or friend, would he have loved in the general? Would crowds of men and women have *awaked* love in him? If so, then the bigger crowd must always move the greater love! No; it is from the individual we go to the many. Love that was only in the general, that cared for the nation, the race, and let the individual perish, could

not be love. He would be no God who cared only for a world or a race. The live conscious individual man could not love or worship him! And if no individual worshipped, where would be the worship of the crowd. Still less could a vague creator of masses, that knew nothing of individuals, being himself not individual, be worthy to be called God! Demon he might be—never God! But if God were a person, an individual, and so loved the individual!—ah, then indeed!—Barbara believed that such a God lived all about and in us! Mr. Wingfold said he was too great to prove, too near to see, but the greater and the nearer, the more fit to be loved! There were things against it! Nature herself seemed against it, for, lovely as she was, she did awful things! Could Nature have come from one source, and God be another source from which came man? He was too near Nature, too much at home with her, to believe it. Could it be one Nature that made all the lovely things, and another Nature that decreed their fate? That also he could not believe: they and their fate must be from one hand, or heart, or will! He could but hope there might be some way of reconciling the terrible dissonnance between Nature and Barbara's God! If there was such a way, if their contradiction was only in seeming, then the very depth of their unity might be the cause of their seeming discord!

Something in this way the mind of Richard felt and thought and saw and doubted and speculated. Then he would turn to the ancient story—still because "Barbara said."

The God Barbara believed in was like Jesus Christ! —not at all like the God his mother believed in! Jesus was one that could be loved: he could not

have come to reveal such a God as his mother's, for he was no revelation of that kind of a God! He was gentle, and cared for the individual! And he said he loved the Father! But he was his son, and a good son might love a bad father. Yes, but could a bad God have a good son? No; the son of God must be the revelation of his father; such as the Son is, just such and no other must the Father be; there cannot but be harmony between the beings of the two!

In very truth there must appear schism in Nature, yea, schism in God himself, until we see that the ruling Father and the suffering Son are of one mind, one love, one purpose; that in the Father the Son rules, in the Son the Father suffers; that with the Son the other children must suffer and rise to rule. To Richard's eyes there was schism everywhere, no harmony, no right, no concord, no peace! And yet all science pointed to harmony, all imagination thirsted for it, all conscience commanded it! all music asserted and prophesied it! all progress was built on the notion of it! all love, the only thing yielding worth to existence, was a partial realization of it! So that the schism came even to this, that harmony itself was divided against itself, asserting that the thing that was not, and could not be, yet ought to be! Nothing but harmony has a real, a true, an essential being; yet here were thousands of undeniable things which seemed to exist in very virtue of their lack of harmony! There were shocks and recoils in every part of every thinking soul, in every part of the object-world! And yet in certain blissful pauses, unlooked for, uncaused by man, certain sudden silences of the world, an eternal harmony would for one moment manifest itself behind

the seething conflicting discords that fill the atmosphere of the soul—straightway to vanish again, it is true, but into the heart of Hope that saves men. If harmony was not at one with itself in its harmony, neither was discord at one with itself in its discordancy! Now and then all Nature seemed on the point of breaking into a smile, and saying. "Ah, children! if you but knew what I know!" Why did she not say what she knew? Why should she hide the thing that would make her children blessed?

The thought, half way to an answer, did not come to Richard then: What if we are not yet able to understand her secret—therefore not able to see it although it lies open before us! What if the difficulty lies in us! What if Nature is doing her best to reveal! What if God is working to make us know—if we would but let Him—as fast as ever He can! There is one thing that will not be pictured, cannot be made notionally present to the mind by any effort of the imagination—one thing that requires the purest faith: a man's own ignorance and incapacity. It is impossible to think of the object of our ignorance, how then realize the ignorance whose very centre is a blank, a negation! When a man knows, then first he gets a glimpse of his ignorance as it vanishes. Ignorance, I say, cannot be the object of knowledge. We must *believe* ourselves ignorant. And for that we must be humble of heart. When our world seems clear to the horizon, when the constellations beyond look plainest, when we seem to be understanding all within our scope, then have we yet to believe that, unseen, formerly unsuspected, beyond, lies that which may wither up many forms of our belief, and must modify every true form in which we hold the truth.

For God is infinite, and we are his little ones, and his truth is eternally better than the best shape in which we see it. Jesus is perfect, but is our idea of him perfect? One thing only is changeless truth in us, and that is—obedient faith in him and his Father. Even that has to grow—but with a growth which is not change. That there is a greater life than that we feel—yea, a life that causes us, and is absolutely and primarily essential to us—of this truth we have a glimpse; but no man will arrive at the peace of it by struggling with the roots of his nature to understand them, for those roots go down and out, out and down infinitely into the infinite. It is by acting upon what he sees and knows, hearkening to every whisper, obeying every hint of the good, following whatever seems light, that the man will at length arrive. Thus obedient, instead of burying himself in the darkness about its roots, he climbs to the tree-top of his being; and looking out thence on the eternal world in which its roots vanish and from which it draws its nourishment, he will behold and understand at least enough to give him rest—and how much more, let his Hope of the glory of God stand at its window and tell him. For in his climbing, the man will, somewhere in his progress upward, the progress of obedience, of accordance to the law of things, awake to know that the same spirit is in him that is in the things he beholds; and that his will, his individuality, his consciousness, as it infolds, so it must find the spirit, that root of himself, which is infinitely more than himself, that "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." When He is known, then all is well. Then is being, and in it the growth of being, laid

open to him. God is the world, the atmosphere, the element, the substance, the essence of his life. In him he lives and moves and has his being. Now he lives indeed; for his Origin is his, and this rounds his being to eternity. God himself is his, as nothing else *could* be his. The serpent of doubt is gagged with his own tail, and becomes the symbol of the eternal.

Dissatisfaction is but the reverse of the medal of life. So long as a man is satisfied, he seeks nothing; when a fresh gulf is opened in his being, he must rise and find wherewithal to fill it. Our history is the opening of such gulfs, and the search for what will fill them.

But Richard was far yet from having his head above the cloudy region of moods and in the blue air of the unchangeable. As the days went by and brought him no word from Barbara, the darkness again began to gather around him. There are as many changes in a lover's weather as in that of England. The sad consolations of nature by degrees forsook him; they grew all sadness and no consolation. The winter of his soul crept steadily upon him, laden with frost and death. He went back to his stern denial of a God. He thought he had no need of any God, because he had no hope in any.

Strangely, but in accordance with his nature, while he denied God, he denied him resentfully. "If there were a God," he said, "why should I pray to him? He has taken from me the one good his world held for me!" Not an hour would he postpone judgment of Him; not one century would he give the God of patience to justify himself to his impatient child! He lost his love of reading. A

book was to him like a grinning death's-head. He ministered to it no longer with his mind, but only his hands. He hated the very look of poetry. The straggling lines of it were loathsome to his eyes. Where, in such a world as he now lived in, could live a God worth being? Where indeed? Richard made his own weather, and it was bad enough. Happily, there is no law compelling a man to keep up the weather or the world he has made. Never will any man devise or develop mood or world fit to dwell in. He must inhabit a world that inhabits him, a world that envelops and informs every thought and imagination of his heart.

In Richard's world, the one true, the one divine thing was its misery, for its misery was its need of God.

CHAPTER XLII.

YET A LOWER DEEP.

But while thus Richard suffered, scarce knew, and cared nothing, how the days went and came, he did his best to conceal his suffering from his father and mother, and succeeded wonderfully. As if in reward for this unselfishness, it flashed into his mind what a selfish fellow he was: his trouble had made him forget Alice and Arthur! he must find them!

He knew the street where the firm employing Arthur used to have its offices; but it had removed to other quarters. He went to the old address, and learned the new one. The next day he told his father he would like to have a holiday. His father making no objection, he walked into the city. There he found the place, but not Arthur. He had not been there for a week, they said. No one seemed to know where he lived; but Richard, regardless of rebuffs, went on inquiring, until at length he found a carman who lived in the same street. He set out for it at once.

After a long walk he came to it, a wretched street enough, in Pentonville, with its numbers here obliterated, there repeated, and altogether so confused, that for some time he could not discover the house. Coming at length to one of the dingiest, whose number was illegible, but whose door stood open, he walked in, and up to the second floor, where he knocked at the first door on the landing. The feeble sound of

what was hardly a voice answered. He went in. There sat Arthur, muffled in an old rug, before a wretched fire, in the dirtiest, rustiest grate he had ever seen. He held out a pallid hand, and greeted him with a sunless smile, but did not speak.

"My poor, dear fellow!" said Richard; "what is the matter with you? Why didn't you let me know?"

The tears came in Arthur's eyes, and he struggled to answer him, but his voice was gone. To Richard he seemed horribly ill—probably dying. He took a piece of paper from his pocket, and a pencil-conversation followed.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Only a bad cold."

"Where is Alice?"

"At the shop. She will be back at eight o'clock."

"Where is your mother?"

"I do not know; she is out."

"Tell me anything I can do for you."

"What does it matter! I do not know anything. It will soon be over."

"And this," reflected Richard, "is the fate of one who believes in a God!" But the thought followed close, "I wish I were going too!" And then came the suggestion, "What if some one cares for him, and is taking him away because he cares for him! What if there be a good time waiting him! What if death be the way to something better! What if God be going to surprise us with something splendid! What if there come a glorious evening after the sad morning and fog-sodden night! What if Arthur's dying be in reality a waking up to a better sunshine than ours! We see only one side of the thing; he may see the other! What if God could not manage to

ripen our life without suffering! If only there were a God that tried to do his best for us, finding great difficulties, but encountering them for the sake of his children!"—"How dearly I should love such a God!" thought Richard. He would hold by him to the last! He would do his best to help him! He would fight for him! He would die for him!

His hour was not yet come to know that there is indeed such a God, doing his best for us in great difficulties, with enemies almost too much for him—the falsehood, namely, the unfilialness of his children, so many of whom will not be true, priding themselves on the good he has created in them, while they refuse to make it their own by obeying it when they are disinclined.

If even he might but hope that with his last sigh Arthur would awake to a consciousness justifying his existence, let him be the creation of a living power or the helpless product of a senseless, formless Ens-non-ens, he would be content! For then they might one day meet again—somewhere, somewhen, somehow; together encounter afresh the troubles and dissatisfactions of life, and perhaps work out for themselves a world more endurable!

But with that came the thought of Barbara.

"No!" he said to himself, "let us all die—die utterly! Why should we grumble at our poor life when it means nothing, is so short, and gives such a sure and certain hope of nothing more! Who would prolong it in such a world, with which every soul confesses itself disappointed, of which every heart cries that it cannot have been made for us! When they grow old, men always say they have found life a delusion, and would not live it again. From the

first, things have been moving toward the worse; life has been growing more dreary; men are more miserable now than when they were savage: how can we tell that the world was not started at its best, to go down hill forever and ever, with a God to urge its evil pace, for surely there is none to stop it! What if the world be the hate-contrivance of a being whose delight it is to watch its shuddering descent into the gulf of extinction, its agonized slide into the red foam of the lake of fire!"

But he must do something for the friend by whose side he had sat speechless for minutes!

"I will come and see you again soon, Arthur," he said; "I must go now. Would you mind the loan of a few shillings? It is all I happen to have about me!"

Arthur shook his head, and wrote,

"Money is of no use—not the least."

"Don't you fancy anything that might do you good?"

"I can't get out to get anything."

"Your mother would get it for you!"

He shook his head.

"But there's Alice!"

Arthur gave a great sigh, and said nothing. Richard laid the shillings on the chimney-piece, and proceeded to make up the fire before he went. He could see no sort of coal-scuttle, no fuel of any kind. With a heavy heart he left him, and went down into the street wondering what he could do.

As he drew near the public-house that chiefly poisoned the neighborhood, it opened its hell-jaws, and cast out a woman in frowzy black, wiping her mouth under her veil with a dirty pocket-handker-

chief. She had a swollen red face, betokening the presence of much drink, walked erect, and went perfectly straight, but looked as if, were she to relax the least of her state, she would stagger. As she passed Richard, he recognized her: it was Mrs. Manson. Without a thought he stopped to speak to her. The same moment he saw that, although not dead-drunk, she could by no tropical contortion be said to be sober.

She started, and gave a snort of indignation.

"You here!" she cried. "What do you want—coming here to insult your betters! You Tuke the younger! You the son of the bookbinder! You're no more John Tuke's son than I am. You're the son of that precious rascal, my husband! Go to Sir Wilton Lestrange; don't come to me! You're a base-born wretch.—Oh, yes, run to your mother. Tell her what I say! Tell her she was lucky to get hold of her tradesman."

She had told her son and daughter that Richard was the missing heir; and in what she now said she may have meant only to reflect on the humble birth of his mother and abuse his aunt, but it does not matter much what a drunkard means. At the same time the poison of asps may come from the lips of a drunkard as from those of a sober liar. As the woman staggered away, Richard gave a stagger too, and seemed to himself, to go reeling along the street. He sat down on a doorstep to recover himself, but for a long way after resuming his walk went like one half stunned. His brain, nevertheless, seemed to go on working of itself. The wretched woman's statement glowed in him with a lurid light. It seemed to explain so much! He had often felt that his father,

though always just, did not greatly care for him. Then there was his mother's strangeness—the hardness of her religion, the gloom that at times took possession of her whole being, her bursts of tenderness, and her occasional irritability! His mother! That his mother should—should have made him an outcast! The thought was sickening! it was horrible! Perhaps the woman lied! But no; something questionable in the background of his life had been unrecognizably showing from the first of his memory! All was clear now! His mother's cruel breach with Alice, and her determination that there should be no intercourse between the families, was explained: had Alice and he fallen in love with each other, she would have had to tell the truth to part them! He *must* know the truth! He would ask his mother straight out, the moment he got home! But how *could* he ask her! How could any son go to his mother with such a question! Whatever the answer to it, he dared not! There was but one alternative left him—either to kill himself, or to smother his suffering, and let the miserable world go on! Why should he add to its misery by making his own mother more miserable! Such a question from her son would go through her heart like the claws of a lynx! How could she answer it! How could he look upon her shame! Had she not had trouble enough already, poor mother! It would be hard if her God assailed her on *all* sides—beset her behind and before! Poor mother indeed, if her son was no better than her God! He must be a better son to her than he had been! The child of her hurt must heal her! Must he as well as his father be cruel to her! But alas, what help was in him! What comfort

could a heart of pain yield! what soothing stream flow from a well of sorrow! Truly his mother needed a new God!

But even this horror held its germ of comfort: he had his brother Arthur, his sister Alice, to care and provide for! They should not die! He had now the right to compel them to accept his aid!

He thought and thought, and saw that, in order to help them, to do his duty by them, he must make a change in his business relations with Mr. Tuke: he must have the command of his earnings! He could do nothing for his brother and sister as things were! To ask for money would wake inquiry, and he dared not let his mother know that he went to see them! If he did, she would be compelled to speak out, and that was a torture he would rather see her die than suffer. He must have money concerning which no questions would be asked! Poor, poor creatures! Oh, that terrible mother! It was good to know that his mother was not like *her!*

The first thing then was, to ask his father to take him as a journeyman, and give him journeyman's wages. His work, he knew, was worth much more, but that would be enough; his father was welcome to the rest. Out of his wages he would pay his share of the housekeeping, and do as he pleased with what was left. Buying no more books, he would have a nice little weekly sum free for Alice and Arthur. To see his brother and sister half starved was unendurable! he would himself starve first! But how was his money to reach them in the shape of food? That greedy, drunken mother of them swallowed everything! Like old Saturn she devoured her children; she ate and drank them to death! Sport of a low,

consuming passion, thought Richard, what matter whether she came of God or devil or nothing at all! Redemption, salvation from an evil self, had as yet no greater part in Richard's theories than in Mrs. Manson's thoughts. The sole good, the sole satisfaction in life the woman knew, was to eat and drink, if not what she pleased, at least what she liked. If there were an eternity in front, thought Richard, and she had her way in it, she would go on forever eating and drinking, craving and filling, to all the ages unsatisfied: he would *not* have his hard-earned money go to fill her insatiable maw! It was not his part in life to make her drunk and comfortable! Wherever he came from, he could not be in the world for that! So what was he to do?

He seemed now to understand why Barbara had not written. She had known him as the son of honest tradespeople, and had no pride to make her despise him; but learning from Alice that he was base-born, she might well wish to drop him! It might not be altogether fair of Barbara—for how was he to blame? Almost as little was she to blame, brought up to count such as he disgraced from their birth! Doubtless her religion should have raised her above the cruel and false prejudice, for she said it taught her to be fair, insisted that she should be just! But with all the world against him, how could one girl stand up for him? True, he needed fair play just so much the more; but that was the way things went in this best of possible worlds! No two things in it, meant to go together, fitted! He fought hard for Barbara, strained his strength with himself to be content beforehand with whatever she might do, or think, or say. One thing only he could not bear—to think

less of Barbara! That would kill him, paralyze his very soul!—of a man make him a machine, a beast outright at best! In all the world, Barbara was likest the God she believed in: if she—the idea of her, that was—were taken from him, he must despair! He could stand losing herself, he said, but not the thought of her! Let him keep that! Let him keep that! He would revel in that, and defy all the evil gods in the great universe!

With his heart like a stone in his bosom, he reached the house, a home to him no more! and by effort supreme—in which, to be honest, for Richard was not yet a hero, he was aided by the consciousness of doing a thing of praise—managed to demean himself rather better than of late. The surges of the sea of troubles rose to overwhelm him; his courage rose to brave them: let them do their worst! he would be a man still! True, his courage had a cry at the heart of it; but there was not a little of the stoic in Richard, and if it was not the stoicism of Epictetus or of Marcus Aurelius, there was yet some timely, transient help in it. He was doing the best he could without God; and sure the Father was pleased to see the effort of his child! To suffer in patience was a step toward himself. No doubt self was potent in the patience, and not the best self, for that forgets itself—yet the better self, the self that chooses what good it knows.

The same night he laid his request for fixed wages before his father, who agreed to it at once. He believed it no small matter in education that a youth should have money at his disposal; and his wife agreed, with a pang, to what he counted a reasonable sum for Richard's board. But she would not hear of his paying for his lodging; that was more than the

mother heart could bear: it would be like yielding that he was not her very own child!

The trouble remained, that a long week must elapse before he could touch any wages, and he dared not borrow for fear of questions: there was no help!

At night, the moment his head was on the pillow, the strain of his stoicism gave way. Then first he felt alone, utterly alone; and the loneliness went into his soul, and settled there, a fearful entity. The strong stoic, the righteous unbeliever burst into a passion of tears. Sure they were the gift of the God he did not know!—say rather, of the God he knew a little, without knowing that he knew him—and they somewhat cooled his burning heart. But the fog of a fresh despair steamed up from the rain, and its clouds closed down upon him. What was left him to live for! what to keep his heart beating! what to make life a living thing! Sunned and showered too much, it was faded and colorless! Why must he live on, as in a poor dream, without even the interest of danger!—for where life is worth nothing, danger is gone, and danger is the last interest of life! All was gray! Nothing was, but the damp and chill of the grave! No cloak of insanest belief, of dullest mistake, would henceforth hide any more the dreary nakedness of the skeleton, life! The world lay in clearest, barest, coldest light, its hopeless deceit and its misery all revealed! It was well that a grumous fog pervaded the air, each atom a spike in a vesicle of darkness! it was well that no summer noon was blazing about the world! At least there was no mockery now! the world was not pretending to be happy! was not helping the demon of laughter to jeer at the misery of men! Oh, the hellish thing, life! Oh, this

devilish thing, existence!—a mask with no face behind it! a look with no soul that looked!—a bubble blown out of lies with the breath of a liar! Words! words! words! Lies! lies! lies!

All of a sudden he was crying, as if with a loud voice from the bottom of his heart, though never a sound rose through his throat, "Oh thou who didst make me, if thou art anywhere, if there be such a one as I cry to, unmake me again; undo that which thou hast done; tear asunder and scatter that which thou hast put together! Be merciful for once, and kill me. Let me cease to exist—rather, let me cease to die. Will not plenty of my kind remain to satisfy thy soul with torment!"

Up towered a surge of shame at his poltroonery; he prayed for his own solitary release, and abandoned his fellows to the maker of their misery!

"No!" he cried aloud, "I will not! I will not pray for that! I will not fare better than my fellows! —O, God, pity—if thou hast any pity, or if pity can be born of any prayer—pity thy creatures! If thou art anywhere, speak to me, and let me hear thee. If thou art God, if thou livest, and carest that I suffer, and wouldst help me if thou couldst, then I will live, and bear, and wait; only let me know that thou art, and art good, and not cruel. If I had but a friend that would stand by me, and talk to me a little, and help me! I have no one, no one, God, to speak to! and if thou wilt not hear, then there is nothing! Oh, be! be! God, I pray thee, exist! Thou knowest my desolation—for surely thou art desolate, with no honest heart to love thee!"

He thought of Barbara, and ceased: *she* loved God!

A silence came down upon his soul. Ere it passed he was asleep, and knew no more till the morning waked him—to sorrow indeed, but from a dream of hope.

On a few-keyed finger-board, yet with multitudinous change, life struck every interval betwixt keen sorrow, lethargic gloom, and grayest hope, and the days passed and passed.

CHAPTER XLIII.

TO BE REDEEMED, ONE MUST REDEEM.

THE moment he received his wages from his father at the end of the week, Richard set out for Everilda Street, Clerkenwell, a little anxious at the thought of encountering the dreadful mother, but hoping she would be out of the way.

When he reached the place, he found no one at home. He could not go back with his mission unaccomplished, and hung about, keeping a sharp watch on each end of the street, and on the approaches to it that he passed in walking to and fro.

He had not waited long before Arthur appeared, stooping like an aged man, and moving slowly. He was in the same shabby muffler as of old. His face brightened when he saw his friend, but a fit of coughing prevented him for some time from returning his salutation.

"When did you have your dinner?" asked Richard.

"I had something to eat in the middle of the day," he answered feebly; "and when Alice comes, she will perhaps bring something with her; but we don't care much about eating.—We've got out of the way of it somehow!" he added with an unreal laugh.

"It's no wonder you can't get rid of your cold!" returned Richard. "Come along, and have something to eat."

"I can't have Ally come home and not find me!" objected Arthur.

"You shall put something in your pocket for her!" suggested Richard.

He seemed to yield; but his every motion was full of indecision. Richard took his arm.

"Do you know any place near," he asked, "where we could get some supper?"

"No, I'm afraid I don't," answered Arthur.

"Then you go in and rest, while I go and see," returned Richard.

He searched for some time, but came upon no place where a man could even sit down. At last he found a coffee-shop, and went to fetch Arthur.

He found him stretched on his bed, but he rose at once to accompany him—with the more difficulty that he had yielded to his weariness and lain down. They managed however to reach their goal, and the sight of food waking a little hunger, the poor fellow did pretty well for one who looked so ill. As he ate he revived, and by and by began to talk a little: he had never been much of a talker—had never had food enough for talking.

"It's very good of you, Richard!" he said. "I suppose you know all about it!"

"I don't. What is it? Anything new?"

"No, nothing! It's all so miserable!"

"It's not all miserable," answered Richard, "so long as we are brothers!"

The tears came in Arthur's eyes. Their mother had repented telling them the truth about Richard, and pretended to have discovered that, while Sir Wilton was indeed Richard's father, Mrs. Tuke was after all his mother.

"Yes, that is good," he said, "though it be only in misfortune! But I am a wretched creature, and no

good to anybody; you are a strong man, Richard; I shall never be worth calling your brother!"

"You can do one great thing for me."

"What is that?"

"Live and grow well."

"I wish I could; but that is just what I can't do. I'm on my way home."

"I would gladly go with you!"

"Why?"

Richard made no answer, and silence followed. Arthur got up.

"Ally will be home," he said, "and thinking me too ill to get along!"

"Let's go then!" said Richard.

When they entered Everilda street, they saw Alice on the doorstep, looking anxiously up and down. The moment she caught sight of them, she ran away along the street. Richard would have followed her, but Arthur held him, and said:

"Never mind her to-night, Richard! She don't know that you know. I will tell her; and when you come again, you will find her different. Go, now, and come as soon as you can—at least, I mean, as soon as you like."

"I will come to-morrow," answered Richard. "Do you want me to go now?"

"It would be better for Alice. I will go to the end of the street, and she will see me from where she is hiding, and come. She always does."

"Is she in the way of hiding then?"

"Yes, when my mother is——"

"Well, good-bye!" said Richard. "But where shall I find you to-morrow?"

They arranged their meeting, and parted.

The next day, they found a better place for their meal. Richard thought it better not to go quite home with Arthur, but, having learned from him where Alice worked, and at what hour she left, went the following night to wait for her not far from the shop.

At last she came along, looking very thin and pale, but she shone up when she saw him, and joined him without the least hesitation.

"How do you think Arthur is?" he asked.

"I've not seen him so well for ever so long," she answered. "But that is not saying much!" she added with a sigh.

They walked along together. With a taste of happiness, say, once a week, Alice would have been a merry girl. She was so content to be with Richard that she never heeded where he was taking her. But when she found him going into a shop with a ham in the window, she drew back.

"No, Richard," she said; "I can't let you feed me and Arthur too! Indeed I can't! It would be downright robbery!"

"Nonsense!" returned Richard; "I want some supper, and you must keep me company!"

"You must excuse me!" she insisted. "It's all right for Arthur; he's ill; but for *me*, I couldn't look myself in the face in the glass if I let you feed *me*—a strong girl, fit for anything!"

"Now look here!" said Richard; "I must come to the point, and you must be reasonble! Ain't you my sister?—and don't I know you haven't enough to eat?"

"Who told you that?"

"No one. Any fool could see it with half an eye!"

"Artie has been telling tales!"

"Not one! Just listen to me. I earn so much a week now, and after paying for everything, have something over to spend as I please. If you refuse me for a brother, say so, and I will leave you alone: why should a man tear his heart out looking on where he can't help!"

She stood motionless, and made him no answer.

"Look here!" he said; "there is the money for our supper: if you will not go with me and eat it, I will throw it in the street."

With her ingrained feeling of the preciousness of money, Alice did not believe him.

"Oh, no, Richard! you would never do that!" she said.

The same instant the coins rang faintly from the middle of the street, and a cab passed over them. Alice gave a cry as of bodily pain, and started to pick them up. Richard held her fast.

"It's your supper, Richard!" she almost shrieked, and struggled to get away after the money.

"Yes," he answered; "and yours goes after it, except you come in and share it with me!"

As he spoke he showed her his hand with shillings in it.

She turned and entered the shop. Richard ordered a good meal.

Alice stopped in the middle of her supper, laid down her knife and fork, and burst out crying.

"What *is* the matter?" said Richard, alarmed.

"I can't bear to think of that money! I must go and look for it!" sobbed Alice.

Richard laughed, the first time for days.

"Alice," he said, "the money was well spent: I got my own way with it!"

As she ate and drank, a little color rose in her face, and on Richard fell a shadow of the joy of his creator, beholding his work, and seeing it good.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN.

Some men hunt their fellows to prey upon them, and fill their own greedy maws; Richard hunted and caught his brother and sister that he might feed them with the labor of his hands. I fear there was therefore a little more for the mother to guzzle, but it is of small consequence whether those that go down the hill arrived at the foot a week sooner or later. To Arthur and Alice, their new-found brother, strong and loving, was as an angel from high heaven. It was no fault in Richard that he did not find a correspondent comfort in them. It did in truth comfort him to see them improve in looks and in strength; but they had not many thoughts to share with him—had little coin for spiritual commerce. Even their religion, like that of most who claim any, had little shape or color. What there was of it was genuine, which made it infinitely precious, but it was much too weak to pass over to the help of another. Divine aid, however, of a different sort, was waiting for him.

Hitherto he had heard little or no music. The little was from the church-organ, and his not unjustifiable prejudice against its surroundings, had disinclined him to listen when it spoke. The intellect of the youth had come to the front, and the higher powers to which art is ministrant, had remained much undeveloped, shut in darkened palace-rooms, where a ray of genial impulse not often entered. For the highest

of those powers, the imagination, without which no discovery of any grandeur is made even in the realms of science, dwells in the halls of aspiration, outlook, desire, and hope, and round the windows and filling the air of these, hung the dry dust-cloud of Richard's negation. But when Love, with her attendant Sorrow, came, they opened wide all the doors and windows of them to what might enter. Hitherto all his poetry, even what he produced, had come to Richard at second hand, that is, from the inspiration of books; its flowers were of the moon, not of the sun; they sprang under the pale reflex light of other souls: for genuine life of any and every sort, the immediate inspiration of the Almighty is the one essential, and for that, Sorrow and Love now made a way.

First of all, the lower winds and sidelong rays, of art, all from the father of lights, crept in, able now to work for his perfect will. For when a man has once begun to live, then have the thoughts and feelings of other men, and every art in which those thoughts or feelings are embodied by them, a sevenfold power for the strengthening and rousing of the divine nature in him. And as the divine nature is roused, the diviner nature, the immediate God, enters to possess it.

A gentleman who employed Richard, happened one day, in conversation with him as he pursued his work, to start the subject of music, and made a remark which, notwithstanding Richard's ignorance, found sufficient way into his mind to make him think over what little experience he had had of sweet sounds, ere he made his reply. When made, it revealed in truth his ignorance, but his modesty as well, and his capacity for understanding—with the result

that the gentleman, who was not only a lover of music but a believer in it, said to him in return things which roused in him such a desire to put them to the test for verification or disproval, that he went the next Monday night to the popular concert at St. James's Hall. In the crowd that waited more than an hour at the door of the orchestra to secure a shilling-place. there was not one that knew so little of music as he; but there never had been in it one whose ignorance was more worthy of destruction. The first throbbing flash of the violins cleft his soul as lightning cleaves a dark cloud, and set his body shivering as with its thunder—and lo, a door was opened in heaven! and, like the writhings of a cloud in the grasp of a heavenly wind, all the discords of spirit-pain were breaking up, changing, and solving themselves into the song of the violins! After that, he went every Monday night to the same concert-room. It was his church, the mount of his ascension, the place whence he soared —no, but was lifted up to what was as yet his highest consciousness of being. All that was best and simplest in him came wide awake as he sat and listened. What fact did the music prove? None whatever. Yet would not the logic of all science have persuaded Richard that the sea of mood and mystic response, tossing his soul hither and thither on its radiant waters, as, deep unto deep, it answered the marching array of live waves, fashioned one by one out of the still air, marshalled and ranked and driven on in symmetric relation and order by those strange creative powers with their curious symbols, throned at their godlike labor—that the answer of his soul, I say, was but an illusion, the babble of a sleeping child in reply to a question never put. If it was an

illusion, how came it that such illusion was possible? If an illusion, whence its peculiar bliss—a bliss aroused by law imperative that ruled its factors, yet bore scant resemblance to the bliss? What he felt, he knew that he felt, and knew that he had never caused it, never commanded its presence, never foreseen its arrival, never known of its possible existence. The feeling was *in him*, but had been waked by some power *beyond him*, for he was not himself even present at its origin! The voice of that power was a voice all sweetness and persuading, yet a voice of creation, calling up a world of splendor and delight, the beams of whose chambers were indeed laid upon the waters, but had there a foundation the less lively earth could not afford. For the very essence of the creative voice, working wildest delirium of content, was law that could not be broken, the very law of the thought of God himself. Law is life, for God is law, and God is life. Law is the root and the stalk of life, beauty is the flower of life, and joy is its odor; but life itself is love. The flower and its odor are given unto men; the root and stalk they may search into if they will; the giver of life they must know, or they cannot live with his life, they cannot share in the life eternal.

One night, after many another such, he sat entranced, listening to the song of a violin, alone and perfect, soaring and sailing the empyrean unconvoyed,—and Barbara in his heart was listening with him. He had given up hope of seeing her again in this world, but not all hope of seeing her again somewhere; and her image had not grown less dear, I should rather say less precious to him. The song, like a heavenly lark, folded its wings while yet high

in the air, and ceased : its nest was somewhere up in the blue. Should I say rather that one after one the singing birds flitted from the strings, those telegraph-wires betwixt the seen and the unseen, and now the last lingerer was gone? All was over, and the world was still. But the face of Barbara kept shining from the depths of Richard's soul, as if she stood behind him, and her face looked up reflected from its ethereal ocean.

All at once he was aware that his bodily eyes were resting on the bodily face of Barbara. It was as if his strong imagining of her had made her be. His heart gave a great bound—and stood still, as if for eternity. But the blood surged back to his brain, and he knew that together they had been listening to the same enchanting spell, had been aloft together in the same aether of delight : heaven is high and deep, and its lower air is music ; in the upper regions the music may pass, who knows, merging unlost, into something endlessly better ! He had felt, without knowing it, the power of her presence ; it had been ruling his thoughts ! He gazed and gazed, never taking his eyes from her but for the joy of seeing her afresh, for the comfort of their return to their home. She was so far off that he could gaze at will, and thus was distance a blessing. Not seldom does removal bring the parted nearer. It is not death alone that makes "far-distant images draw nigh," but distance itself is an angel of God, mediating the propinquity of souls. As he gazed he became aware that she saw him, and that she knew that he saw her. How he knew it he could not have told. There was no change on her face, no sign of recognition, but he knew that she saw and knew. In his

modesty he neither perceived nor imagined more. His heart received no thrill from the pleasure that throbbed in the heart of the lovely lady at sight of the poor sorrowful workman ; neither did she in her modesty perceive on what a throne of gems she sat in his heart. She saw that his cheek was pale and thin, and that his eyes were larger and brighter ; she little thought how the fierce sun of agony had ripened his soul since they parted.

For the rest of the concert, the music had sunk to a soft delight, and took the second place ; the delight of seeing dulled his delight in hearing. All the rainbow claspings and weavings of strange accords, all the wing-wafts of out-dreaming melody, seemed to him to come flickering and floating from one creative centre—the face, and specially the eyes of Barbara ; yet the music and Barbara seemed one. The form of it that entered by his eyes met that which entered by his ears, and they were one ere he noted a difference. Barbara was the music, and the music was Barbara. He saw her with his ears ; he heard her with his eyes. But as the last sonata sank to its death, suddenly the face and the tones parted company, and he knew that his eyes and her face must part next, and the same moment her face was already far away. She had left him ; she was looking for her fan, and preparing to go.

He was not far from the door. He hurried softly out, plunged into the open air as into a great cool river, went round the house, and took his stand at one of the doors, where he waited like one watching the flow of a river of gravel for the shine of a diamond. But the flow sank to threads and drops, and the diamond never shone.

He walked home, nevertheless, as if he had seen an end of sorrow: how much had been given him that night, for ever to have and to hold! Such an hour went far to redeem the hateful thing, life! A much worse world would be more than endurable, with its black and gray once or twice in a century crossed by such a band of gold! Who would not plunge through ages of vapor for one flash of such a star! Who would not dig to the centre for one glimpse of a gem of such exhaustless fire! "But, alas, how many for whom no golden threads are woven into the web of life!" he said to himself as he thought of Alice and Arthur—but straightway answered himself, saying, "Who dares assert it? The secret of a man's life is with himself; who can speak for another!" He had himself been miserable, and was now content—oh, how much more than content—that he had been miserable! He was even strong to be miserable again! What might not fall to the lot of the rest, every one of them, ere God, if there were a God, had done with them! Who invented music? Some one must have made the delight of it possible! With his own share in its joy he had had nothing to do! Was Chance its grand inventor, its great ingeniuer? Why or how should Chance love loveliness that was not, and make it be, that others might love it? Could it be a deaf God, or a being that did not care and would not listen, that invented music? No; music did not come of itself, neither could the source of it be devoid of music!

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CARRIAGE.

Before the next Monday, he had learned the outlets of the hall, and the relations of its divisions to its doors. But he fared no better, for whether again he mistook the door or not, he did not see Barbara come out. He had been with her, however, through all the concert; there was reason to hope she would be often present, and every time there would be a chance of his getting near her? The following Monday, nevertheless, she was not in the house: had she been, he said to himself, his eyes would of themselves have found her.

A fortnight passed, and Richard had not again seen Barbara. He began to think she must have gone home. A gentleman was with her the first night, whom he took for her father; the second, Arthur Lestrange was by her side: neither of them had he seen since.

Then the thought suggested itself that she might have come to London to prepare for her marriage with Mr. Lestrange. She must of course be married some day! He had always taken that for granted, but now, for the first time somehow, the thought came near enough to burn. He did not attempt to analyze his feelings; he was too miserable to care for his feelings. The thought was as terrible as if it had been quite new. It was not a live thought

before ; now it was alive, and until now he had not known misery. That Barbara should die seemed nothing beside it! Death was no evil! Whether there was a world beyond it or not, it was the one friend of the race! In death at last, outworn, tortured humanity would find repose!—or if not, what followed could not, at worst, be worse than what went before! It must be better, for the one misery of miseries would be to live in the same world with Barbara married! She was out of sight of him, far as princess or queen—or angel, if there were such a being ; but the thought that she should marry a common, outside man, who knew no more what things were precious than the lowest fellow in the slums, was a pain he could neither stifle nor endure. Could a woman like Barbara for an instant entertain the notion? If she loved a man worthy of her, then—he thought, as so many have for a moment thought—he could bear the torture of it! But for such patience in prospect men are generally indebted to the fact that the man is not likely to appear, or, at least, has not yet come in sight. In vain he persuaded himself that Barbara would no more listen to such a suitor, than a man could ever show himself on the level of her love. That Barbara would marry Lestrange grew more and more likely as he regarded the idea. Mortgrange and Wylder Hall were conveniently near, and he had heard his grandfather suppose that Barbara must one day inherit the latter! The thought was a growing torment. His heart sank into a draw-well of misery, out of which the rope of thinking could draw up nothing but suicide. But as often as the bucket rose thus laden, Richard cast its contents from him. It was cowardly to hide one's

head in the sand of death! So long as he was able to stand, why should he lie down? If a morrow was on the way, why not see what the morrow would bring? why not look the apparition in the face, though for him it brought no dawn?

Once more the loud complaint against life awoke and raged. What an evil, what a wrong was life! Who had dared force the thing upon him? What being, potent in ill, had presumed to call him from the blessed regions of negation, the solemn quiet of being and knowing nothing, and compel him to live without, nay, against his will, in misery such as only an imagination keen to look upon suffering could have embodied or even invented? Alas, there was no help! If he lifted his hand against the life he hated, he might but rush into a region of torture more exquisite! For might not the life-compelling tyrant, offended that he should desire to cease, fix him in eternal beholding of his love and his hate folded in one—to sicken, yet never faint, in aeonian pain, such as life essential only could feel? He rebelled against the highest as if the highest were the lowest—as if the power that *could* create a heart for bliss, might gloat on its sufferings.

Again and again he would take the side of God against himself; but always there was the undeniable, the inexplicable misery! Whence came it? It could not come from himself, for he hated it! and if God did not cause, yet he could prevent it! Then he remembered how blessed he had been but a few days before; how ready to justify God; how willing to believe he had reason in all he did: alas for his nature, for his humanity! clothed in his own joy, he was generous to trust God with the bliss of others;

the cold blast of the world once again swept over him, and he stood complaining against him more bitterly than ever!

It is a notable argument, surely, against the existence of God, that they who believe in him, believe in him so wretchedly! So many carry themselves to him like peevish children! Richard half believed in God, only to complain of him altogether! Were it not better to deny him altogether, saying that such things being, he cannot be, than to murmur and rebel as against one high and hard?

But I bethink me: is it not better to complain if one but complain to God himself? Does he not then draw nigh to God with what truth is in him? And will he not then fare as Job, to whom God drew nigh in return, and set his heart at rest?

For him who complains and comes not near, who shall plead?—The Son of the Father, saying, "They know not what they do."

He began to wonder whether even an all-mighty and all-good God would be able to contrive such a world as no somebody in it would ever complain of. What if he had plans too large for the vision of men to take in, and they were uncomfortable to their own blame, because, not seeing them, they would trust him for nothing? He knew unworthy men full of complaint against an economy that would not let them live like demons, and be blessed as seraphs! Why should not a man at least wait and see what the possible being was about to do with him, perhaps for him, before he accused or denied him? At worst he would be no worse for the waiting!

His thinking was stopped by a sudden flood of self-contempt. Was Barbara to live alone that he

might think of her in peace! He was a selfish, disgraceful, degraded animal, deserving all he suffered, and ten times more! What did it matter whether *he* was happy or not, if it was well with her! Was he a man, and could he not endure! Here was a possible nobility! here a whole world wherein to be divine! A man was free to sacrifice his happiness: for him, he had nothing but his crowned sorrow; he would sacrifice that! Had any one ever sacrificed his sorrow to his love? Would it not be a new and strange sacrifice? To know that he suffered would make her a little unhappy: for her sake he would *not* be unhappy! He would at least for her sake fight with his grief; he would live to love her still, if never more to look on her face. In after eternal years, if ever once more they met, he would tell her how for her sake he had lived in peace, and neither died nor gone mad! Yea, for her sake, he would still seek her God, if haply he might find him! Was there not a possible hope that he would justify to him, even in his heart, his ways with men, and his ways with himself among his fellows? What if there was a way so much higher than ours, as to include all the seeming right and seeming wrong in one radiance of righteousness! The idea was scarce conceivable; it was not one he could illustrate to himself; but as a thought transcending flesh and blood, better and truer than what *we* are able to think of as truth, he would try to hold by it! Things that we are right in thinking bad, must be bad to God as well as to us; but may there not be things so far above us, that we cannot take them in, and they seem bad because they are so far above us in goodness that we see them partially and untruly? There must be room in his

wisdom for us to mistake! He would try to trust! He would say, "If thou art my father, be my father, and comfort thy child. Perhaps thou hast some way! Perhaps things are not as thou wouldst have them, and thou art doing what can be done to set them right! If thou art indeed true to thy own, it were hard not to be believed—hard that one of thine own should not trust thee, should not give thee time to make things clear, should behave to thee as if thou wouldst not explain, when it is that we are unable to understand!"

He was thinking with himself thus, as he walked home, late one Monday night, from the concert, to which had come none of the singing birds of his own forests to meet and make merry with the song-birds of the violins. Like a chaos of music without form and void, the sweet sounds had stormed and billowed against him, and he had left the door of his late paradise hardly in better mood than if it had been the church of the Rev. Theodore Gosport, who for the traditions of men made the word of God of small effect!

He was walking westward, with his eyes on the ground, along the broad pavement on the house-side of Piccadilly, lost half in misery, half in thought, when he was stopped by a little crowd about an awning that stretched across the footway. The same instant rose a murmur of admiration, and down the steps from the door came tripping, the very Allegra of motion, the same Barbara to whose mould his being seemed to have shaped itself. He stood silent as death, but something made her cast a look on him, and she saw the large eyes of his suffering fixed on her. She gave a short, musical cry, and

turning darted through the crowd, leaving her escort at the foot of the steps.

"Richard!" she cried, and catching hold of his hand, laid her other hand on his shoulder—then suddenly became aware of the gazing faces, not all pleasant to look upon, that came crowding closer about them.

She pulled him toward a brougham that stood at the curbstone.

"Jump in," she whispered. Then turning to the gentleman, who in a bewildered way fancied she had caught a prodigal brother in the crowd, "Good-night, Mr. Cleveland," she said: "thank you!"

One moment Richard hesitated; but he saw that neither place nor time allowed anything but obedience, and when she turned again, he was already seated.

"Home!" she said to the coachman as she got in, for she had no attendant.

"I must talk fast," she began, "and so must you; we have not far to go together.—Why did you not write to me?"

"I did write."

"Did you?" exclaimed Barbara.

"I did indeed."

"Then what could you think of me?"

"I thought nothing you would not like me to think. I was sure there was an explanation!"

"That of course! You knew that!—But how ill you look!"

"It is from not seeing you any more at the concerts," answered Richard.

"Tell me your address, and I will write to you.

But do not write to me. When shall you be at the hall again?"

"Next Monday. I am there every Monday."

"I shall be there, and will take your answer from your hand in the crush as I come out by the Regent Street door."

She pulled the coachman's string.

"Now you must go," she said. "Thank God I have seen you! Tell me when you write if you know anything of Alice."

She gave him her hand. He got out, closed the door, took off his hat, and stood for minutes uncovered in the cold clear night, hardly sure whether he had indeed been side by side with Barbara, or in a heavenly trance.

CHAPTER XLVI.

RICHARD'S DILEMMA.

He turned and walked home—but with a heart how different! The world was folded in winter and night, but in his heart the sun was shining, and it made a wonder and a warmth at the heart of every crystal of the frost that spangled and feathered and jewel-crusted rail and tree! The misty moon was dreaming of spring, and almond blossoms, and nightingales.—But did Barbara know about him? Had Alice told the terrible secret? If she knew, and did not withdraw her friendship, he could bear anything—almost anything! But he would be happy now, would keep happy as long as he could, and try to be happy when he could not! She was with him all the way home. Every step was a delight. Foot lingered behind foot as he came; now each was eager to pass the other.

He slept a happy sleep, and in the morning was better than for many a day—so much better that his mother, who had been watching him with uneasiness, and wondering whether she ought not to bring matters to a crisis, began to feel at rest about him. She had not a suspicion of what now troubled him the most! A little knowledge is not, but the largest half-knowledge is a dangerous thing! He knew who was his father, but he did not know who was not his mother; and from this half-knowledge rose the thickest of the cloud that yet overshadowed him.

He had been proud that he came of such good people as his father and mother, but it was not the notion of shame to himself that greatly troubled him; it was the new feeling about his mother. He did not think of her as one to be blamed, but as one too trusting, and so deceived; he never felt unready to stand up for her. What troubled him was that she must always know that unspoken-of something between her and her son, that his mother must feel shame before him. He could not bear to think of it. If only she would say something to him, that he might tell her she was his own precious mother, whatever had befallen her! that for her sake he could spurn the father that begot him! Already had come this good of Mrs. Manson's lie that Richard felt far more the goodness of his mother to him, and loved her the better that he believed himself her shame. It is true that his love increased upon a false idea, but the growth gained by his character could not be lost, and so his love would not grow less—for no love, that is loved, save God's, can clothe warm enough the being around whom it gathers. And when he learned the facts of the story, he would not find that he had given his aunt more love than she deserved at his heart.

As soon as the next day's work was over, Richard sat down to write to Barbara. But he had no sooner taken the pen in his fingers, than he became doubtful: what was he to say? He could not open his heart about any of the things that troubled him most! Putting aside the recurrent dread of her own marriage, how could he mention his mother's wrong and his own shame to a girl so young? She must be aware that such things were, but how was he, a

huge common fellow, to draw near her loveliness with such a tale in his mouth! It would be a wrong to his own class, to his own education! for would it not show the tradesman, or the artisan, whichever they called him, as coarse, and unfit for the company of his social superiors? It would go to prove that in no sense could one of his nurture be regarded as a gentleman! And were there no such reason against it, how could he, even to Barbara, speak of his mother's hidden pain, of his mother's humiliation! It would be treachery! He would be as a spy that had hid himself in a holy place! The thing she could not tell him, how could he tell any one! On the other hand, if he did not let her know the sad fact, would he not be receiving and cherishing Barbara's friendship on false pretences? He was not what he now seemed to her—and to be other to Barbara than he seemed, was too terrible! Still and again, he was bound to do her the justice of believing that she would not regard him differently because of what he could not help, and would justify his silence for his mother's sake. She would, in her great righteousness, be the first to cry out upon the social rule that visited the sins of the fathers on the mothers and children, and not on the fathers themselves! If then disclosure would make no difference to Barbara, he might, he concluded, let the thing rest—for the time at least—assured of her sisterly sympathy. And with that he bethought him that she had asked news of Alice, and it seemed to him strange. For Alice had not told him that, unable to keep the money she sent from falling into the hands of her mother and going in drink, unwilling to expose her mother, and incapable of letting

Barbara spend her money so, she had contrived to have her remittances returned, as if they had changed their dwelling, and their new address was unknown.

He wrote therefore what he thought would set her at ease about them; and then, after thinking and thinking, yielded to the dread lest his heart should make him say things he ought not, and ended with a little poem that had come to him a night or two before.

This was the poem:

If there lie a still, pure sorrow
At the heart of everything,
If never shall dawn a morrow
With healing upon its wing,
Then down I kneel to my sorrow,
And say, Thou art my king!

From old pale joy I borrow
A withered song to sing!
And with heart entire and thorough,
To a calm despair I cling,
And, freedman of old king Sorrow,
Away Hope's fetters fling!

That was all—and not much, either as poetry, or as consolation to one that loved him; but sometimes, like that ghastly shroud of Icelandic fable, the poem will rise and wrap itself around the poet.

As Richard closed his envelope, he remembered, with a pang of self-reproach, that the hour of his usual meeting with Alice was past, and that Arthur too was in danger of going to bed hungry, for his custom was to put her brother's supper in Alice's handbag. He set out at once for Clerkenwell—on foot notwithstanding his haste, for he was hoarding every penny to get new clothes for Arthur, who was not only much

in want of them for warmth, but in risk of loosing his situation because of his shabby appearance.

His anxiety to reach the house before the mother came in, spurred him to his best speed. He halted two minutes on the way to buy some slices of ham and some rolls, and ran on again. It was a frosty night, but by the time he reached Everilda Street, he was far from cold. He was rewarded by finding his brother and sister at home, alone, and not too hungry.

He had just time to empty his pockets, and receive a kiss from Alice in return, when they heard the uncertain step of their mother coming up the stair, stopping now and then, and again resuming the ascent. Alice went to watch which door she would turn to when she reached the top, that Richard might go out by the other, for the two rooms communicated. But just as she was entering Arthur's room, Mrs. Manson changed her mind, and turned to the other door, so that Richard was caught in the very act of making his exit. She flew at him, seized him by the hair, and began to pull and cuff him, abusing him as the true son of his father, who did everything on the sly, and never looked an honest woman in the face. Richard said never a word, but let her tug and revile till there was no more strength in her, when she let him go, and dropped into a chair.

The three went half-way down the stair together.

"Don't mind her," said Alice with a great sob. "I hope she didn't hurt you much, Richard!"

"Not a bit," answered Richard.

"Poor mother!" sighed Arthur; "she's not in her right mind! We're in constant terror lest she drop down dead!"

"She's not a very good mother to you!" said Richard.

"No, but that has nothing to do with loving her," answered Alice; "and to think of her dying like that, and going straight to the bad place! Oh, Richard, what *shall* I do! It turns me crazy to think of it!"

The door above them opened, and the fierce voice of the mother fell upon them; but it was broken by a fit of hiccupping, and she went in again, slamming the door behind her.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE DOORS OF HARMONY AND DEATH.

THAT night Richard could not rest. His brain wrought unceasingly.

He had caught cold and was feverish. After his hot haste to reach his brother and sister, he had stood on the stair till his temperature sank low. When at length he slept, he kept starting awake from troublous dreams, and this went on through the night. In the morning he felt better, and rose and set to his work, shivering occasionally. All the week he was unwell, and coughed, but thought the attack an ordinary cold. When Sunday came, he kept his bed, in the hope of getting rid of it; but the next day he was worse. He insisted on getting up, however: he must not seem to be ill, for he was determined, if he could stand, to go to the concert! What with weariness and shortness of breath and sleepiness, however, it was all he could do to stick to his work. But he held on till the evening, when, watching his opportunity, he slipped from the house and made his way, with the help of an omnibus, to the hall.

It was dire work waiting till the door to the orchestra was opened. The air was cold, his lungs heavily oppressed, and his languor almost overpowering. But paradise was within that closed door, and he was passing through the pains of death to enter into bliss! When at length it seemed to yield to his prayers, he almost fell in the rush, but the good-

humored crowd itself succored the pale youth, and helped him in: to look at him was to see that he was ill!

The moment the music began, he forgot every discomfort. For, with the first chord of the violins, as if ushered in and accompanied by the angels themselves of the sweet sounds, Barbara came flitting down the centre of the wide space toward her usual seat. The rows of faces that filled the area were but the waves on which floated the presence of Barbara; the music was the natural element of her being; it flowed from her as from its fountain, radiated from her like odor. It fashioned around her a nimbus of sound, like that made by the light issuing from the blessed ones, as beheld by Dante, which revealed their presence but hid them in its radiance, as the moth is hid in the silk of its cocoon. Richard felt entirely well. The warmth entered into him, and met the warmth generated in him. All was peace and hope and bliss, quaintest mingling of expectation and fruition. Even Arthur Lestrange beside Barbara could not blast his joy. He saw him occasionally offer some small attention; he saw her carelessly accept or refuse it. Barbara gazed at him anxiously, he thought; but he did not know he looked ill; he had forgotten himself.

When the concert was over, he hastened from the orchestra. The moment he issued, the cold wind seized and threatened to strangle him, but he conquered in the struggle, and reached the human torrent debouching in Regent Street. Against it he made gradual way, until he stood near the inner door of the hall. In a minute or two he saw her come, slowly with the crowd, her hand on Arthur's arm, her

eyes anxiously searching for Richard. The moment they found him, her course took a drift toward him, and her face grew white as his, for she saw more plainly that he was ill. They edged nearer and nearer; their hands met through the crowd; their letters were exchanged, and without a word they parted. As Barbara reached the door, she turned one moment to look for him, and he saw a depth of care angelic in her eyes. Arthur turned too and saw him, but Richard was so changed he did not recognize him, and thought the suffering look of a stranger had roused the sympathy of his companion.

How he got home, Richard could not have told. Ere he reached the house, he was too ill to know anything except that he had something precious in his possession. He managed to get to bed—not to leave it for weeks. A severe attack of pneumonia had prostrated him, and he knew nothing of his condition or surroundings. He had not even opened his letter. He remembered at intervals that he had a precious thing somewhere, but could not recall what it was.

When he came to himself after many days, it was with a wonderful delight of possession; though whether the object possessed was a thing, or a thought, or a feeling, or a person, he could not distinguish.

"Where is it?" he said, nor knew that he spoke till he heard his own voice.

"Under your pillow," answered his mother.

He turned his eyes, and saw her face as he had never seen it before—pale, and full of yearning love and anxious joy. There was a gentleness and depth in its expression that was new to him. The divine

motherhood had come nearer the surface in her boy's illness.

Partly from her anxiety about what she had done and what she had yet to do, the show of her love had, as the boy grew up, gradually retired; her love burned more, and shone less. If Jane Tuke had been able to let her love appear in such forms as suited its strength, I doubt whether the teaching of his father would have had much power upon Richard; certainly he would have been otherwise impressed by the faith of his mother. He would have been prejudiced in favor of the God she believed in, and would have sought hard to account for the ways attributed to him. None the less would it have been through much denial and much suffering that he arrived at anything worth calling faith; while the danger would have been great of his drifting about in such indifference as does not care that God should be righteous, and is ready to call anything just which men in office declare God does, without concern whether it be right or wrong, or whether he really does it or not—without concern indeed about anything at all that is God's. He would have had phantoms innumerable against him. He would have supposed the Bible said things about God which it does not say, things which, if it did say them, ought to be enough to make any honest man reject the notion of its authority as an indivisible whole. He would have had to encounter all the wrong notions of God, dropped on the highway of the universe, by the nations that went before in the march of humanity. He would have found it much harder to work out his salvation, to force his freedom from the false forms given to truth by interpreters of little faith, for they

would have seemed born in him because loved into him.

"What did you say, mother dear?" he returned, all astray, seeming to have once known several things, but now to know nothing at all.

"It is under your pillow, Richard," she said again, very tenderly.

"What is it, mother? Something seems strange. I don't know what to ask you. Tell me what it means."

"You have been very ill, my boy; that is what it means."

"Have I been out of my mind?"

"You have been wandering with the fever, nothing more."

"I have been thinking so many things, and they all seemed real!—And you have been nursing me all the long time!"

"Who should have been nursing you, Richard? Do you think I would let any one else nurse my own child? Didn't I nurse the——"

She stopped; she had been on the point of saying —"the mother that bore you?" Her love of her dead sister was one with her love of that sister's living child.

He lay silent for a time, thinking, or rather trying to think, for he felt like one vainly endeavoring to get the focus of a stereoscopic picture. His mind kept going away from him. He knew himself able to think, yet he could not think. It was a revelation to him of our helplessness with our own being, of our absolute ignorance of the modes in which our nature works—of what it is, and what we can and cannot do with it.

"Shall I get it for you, dear?" said his mother.

The morning after the concert, he had taken Barbara's letter from under his pillow, and would not let it out of his hand. His mother, fearing he would wear it to pieces, once and again tried to remove it; but the moment she touched it, he would cry out and strike; and when in his restless turning he dropped it, he showed himself so miserable that she could not but put it in his hand again, when he would lie perfectly quiet for a while. Dreaming of Barbara however, I fancy, he at length forgot her letter, and his mother again put it under his pillow. With the Lord, we shall forget even the gospel of John.

She drew out the crumpled, frayed envelope, and gave it him. The moment he touched it, everything came back to him.

"Now I remember, mother!" he cried. "Thank you, mother! I will try to be a better boy to you. I am sorry I ever vexed you."

"You never vexed me, Richard!" said the mother-heart; "—or if ever you did, I've forgotten it. And now that God has given you back to us, we must see whether we can't do something better for you!"

Richard was so weary that he did not care to ask what she meant, and in a moment was asleep, with the letter in his hand.

When at length he was able to read it, it caused him not a little pleasure, and some dismay. He read that her father was determined she should marry Mr. Lestrange; but her mother was against it; and there was as much dissension at home as ever. She believed Lady Ann had talked her father into it, for he had not always favored the idea. There was indeed

greater reason now why both Lady Ann and her father should desire it, for there was every likelihood of her being left sole heir to the property, as her brother could not, the doctors said, live many months. She was sure her mother was trying to do right, and she herself did all she could to please her father, but nothing less than her consent to his plans for what he called her settlement in life, would satisfy him, and that she could not give.

She hoped Richard was not forgetting the things they had such talks about in the old days. If it were not for those things, she could not now bear life, or rightly take her part in it. She was almost never alone, and now in constant danger of interruption, so that he must not wonder if her letter broke off abruptly, for she might be wanted any moment. She was leading, or rather being led, a busy life of nothing at all—a life not worth living. Her father, set on, she had no doubt, by Lady Ann, had brought her up to town while yet her mother was unable to accompany them, so that she had had to go where, and do what Lady Ann pleased. But her mother had at last, exerting herself even beyond her strength, come up to stand by her girl, as she said: she would have no Lady Ann interfering with her! She had herself married a man she had not learned to respect, and she was determined her girl should make her own choice—or keep as she was, if she pleased! She was not going to hold her child down for them to bury in money!—And with this the letter broke off.

Barbara's openness about her parents was in harmony with her simplicity and straight-forwardness. She was proud of her mother and the way she put things, therefore told all to Richard.

He had a bad night, with delirious dreams, and for some days made little progress. His anxiety to be well, that he might see Barbara, and learn how things were going with her, also that he might again see Alice and Arthur, for whom he feared much, retarded his recovery.

"If the woman is drinking herself to death," he said to himself, "I wish she would be quick about it! In this world she is doing no good to herself, and much harm to others!"

But it would be the ruin, he said to himself, of all hope in the care and love of God, to believe that she could be allowed to live a moment longer than it was well she should live. Then he thought how wise must be a God who, to work out his intent, would take all the conduct, good and bad, all the endeavors of all his children, in all their contrarieties, and out of them bring the right thing. If he knew such a God, one to trust in absolutely, he would lie still without one movement of fear, he would go to sleep without one throb of anxiety about any he loved! The perfect Love would not fail because one of his children was sick! He would try to be quiet, if only in the hope that there was a perfect heart of hearts, thinking love to and into and about all its creatures. If there was such a splendor, he would either make him well, and send him out again to do for Alice and Arthur what he could, or he would let him die and go where all he loved would come after him—where he might perhaps help to prepare a place for them!

If matter be all, then must all illness be blinding; if spirit be the deeper and be the causer, then some sicknesses may well be openers of windows into the unseen. It is true that in one mood we are ready to

doubt the conclusions of another mood; but there is a power of judging between the moods themselves, with a perception of their character and nature, and the comparative clarity of insight in each; and he who is able to judge the moods may well judge the judgments of the moods.

One of the benefits of illness is, that, either from general weakness or from the brain's being cast into quiescence, habits are broken for a time, and more simple, childlike and natural modes of thought and feeling, modes more approximate to primary and original modes, come into action, whereby the right thing has a better chance. A man's self-stereotyped thinking is unfavorable to revelation, whether through his fellows or direct from the divine. If there be a divine quarter, those must be opener to its influences who are not frozen in their own dullness, cased in their own habits, bound by their own pride to foregone conclusions, or shut up in the completeness of human error, theorizing beyond their knowledge and power.

Having thus in a measure given himself up, Richard began to grow better. It is a joy to think that a man may, while anything but sure about God, yet come into correlation with him! How else should we be saved at all? For God alone is our salvation; to know him is salvation. He is in us all the time, else we could never move to seek him. It is true that only by perfect faith in him can we be saved, for nothing but perfect faith in him is salvation: there is no good but him, and not to be one with that good by perfect obedience is to be unsaved; but one better thought concerning him, the poorest desire to draw near him, is an approach to him. Very unsure

of him we may be: how should we be sure of what we do not yet know? but the unsureness does not nullify the approach. A man may not be sure that the sun is risen, may not be sure that the sun will ever rise, yet has he the good of what light there is. Richard was fed from the heart of God without knowing that he was indeed partaking of the spirit of God. He had been partaking of the body of God all his life. The world had been feeding him with its beauty and essential truth, with the sweetness of its air, and the vastness of its vault of freedom. But now he had begun, in the words of St. Peter, to be a partaker of the divine nature.

It was a long time before he was strong again—in fact, he never would be so strong again in this world. His mother took him to the seaside, where, in a warm secluded bay on the south coast, he was wrapt closer, shall I not say, in the garments of the creating and reviving God. He was again a child, and drew nearer to the heart of his mother than he had ever drawn before. Believing he knew her sad secret, he set himself to meet her every wish—which was always some form of anxiety about himself. He spoke so gently to her, that she felt she had never until now had him her very child. How little men think, alas, of the duty that lies in *tone!* But Richard was started on a voyage of self-discovery. He had begun to learn that regions he had thought wholesome, productive portions of his world, were a *terra incognita* of swamps and sandy hills, haunted with creeping and stinging things. When a man finds he is not what he thought, that he has been talking fine things, and but imagining he belonged to their world, he is on the way to discover that he is not up to his

duty in the smallest thing. When, for very despair, it seems impossible to go on, then he begins to know that he needs more than himself; that there is none good but God; that, if he can gain no help from the perfect source of his being, that being ought not to have been given him; and that, if he does not cry for help to the father of his spirit, the more pleasant existence is the less he deserves it should continue. Richard was beginning to feel, in his deepest nature, where alone it can be felt, his need of God, not merely to comfort him in his sorrows, and so render life possible and worth living, but to make him such that he could bear to regard himself; to make him such that he could righteously consent to be. The only thing that can reassure a man in respect of the mere fact of his existence, is to know himself started on the way to grow better, with the hope of help from the source of his being: how should he by himself better that which he was powerless to create? All betterment must be radical: of the roots of his being he knows nothing. His existence is God's; his betterment must be God's too!—God's through honest exercise by man of that which is highest in man—his own will, God's best handiwork. By actively willing the will of God, and doing what of it lies to his doing, the man takes the share offered him in his own making, in his own becoming. In willing actively and operatively to be that which he was made in order to be, he becomes creative—so far as a man may. In this kind also he becomes like his Father in heaven.

If a reader say Richard was too young to think thus, it only proves that *he* could not think so at Richard's age, and goes for little. I may be interpreting,

and rendering more definite the thoughts and feelings that passed through him: it does not follow that I misrepresent. Many thoughts must be made more definite in expression, else they could not be expressed at all; many feelings are as hazy as real, and some of them must be left to music.

He grew in graciousness and in favor with God and his mother. Often did she meditate whether the hour was not come for the telling of her secret, but now one thing, now another deterred her. One time she feared the excitement in the present state of his health; another, she judged it unfair to the husband who had behaved with such generosity, to yield him no part in the pleasure of the communication.

Once, to comfort him when he seemed depressed, she ventured to say—

"Would you like better to go to Oxford or to Cambridge, Richard?"

He looked up with a smile.

"What makes you ask that, mammy?" he rejoined.

"Perhaps it could be managed!" she answered—leaving him to suppose his father might send him.

"Is it because you think I shall never be able to work again?—Look at that!" he returned, extending an arm on which the muscle had begun to put in an appearance.

"It's not for your strength," she answered. "For that, you could do well enough! But think of the dust! It's so irritating to the lungs! And then there's the stooping all day long!"

"Never mind, mother; I'm quite able for it, dust and all—or at least shall soon be. We mustn't be anxious about others any more than about ourselves. Doesn't the God you believe in tell you so?"

"Don't you believe in him then, Richard?" said his mother sadly.

"I think I do—a little—in a sort of a way—believe in God—but I hope to believe in him ten thousand times more!"

His mother gave a sigh.

"What more would you have, mother dear?" said Richard. "A man cannot be a saint all at once!"

"No, indeed, nor a woman either!" she answered. "I've been a believer all these years, and I'm no nearer a saint than ever."

"But you're trying to be one, ain't you, mammy?"

She made him no reply, and presently reverted to their former topic—perhaps took refuge in it.

"I think it might be managed—some day!" she said. "You could go on with your trade after, if you liked. Why shouldn't a college-man be a tradesman? Why shouldn't a tradesman know as much as a gentleman?"

"Why, indeed, mother! If I thought it wouldn't be too much for father and you, there are not many things I should like better than going to Oxford.—You are good to me like God himself!"

"Richard!" said his mother, shocked. She thought she served God by going to church, not by being like him in every word and look of love she gave her boy.

The mere idea of going to college, and thus taking a step nearer to Barbara, began immediately to better his health. It gave him many a happy thought, many a cottage and castle in the air, with more of a foundation than he knew. But his mother did not revert to it; and one day suddenly the thought came to Richard that perhaps she meant to

apply to Sir Wilton for the means of sending him. Castle and cottage fell in silent ruin. His soul recoiled from the idea with loathing—as much for his mother's sake as his own. Having married his reputed father, she must have no more relation, for good any more than for bad, with Sir Wilton—least of all for his sake! To her he was dead; and ought to be as dead as disregard could make him! So, at least, thought Richard. He was sorry he had confessed he should like to go to Oxford. If his mother again alluded to the thing, he would tell her he had changed his mind, and would not interrupt the exercise of his profession as surgeon to old books.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

DEATH THE DELIVERER.

THE spring advanced; the days grew a little warmer; and at length, partly from economic considerations, it was determined they should go home. When they reached London, they found a great difference in the weather: it cannot be said she owes her salubrity to her climate. Fog and drizzle, frost and fog, were the embodiment of its unvarying mutability. At once Richard was worse, and dared not think, for his mother's sake, and the labor she had spent upon him, of going to the next popular concert, if indeed those delights had not ceased for the season. But he ought to try, for he could do that in the middle of the day, at least to get news of Arthur Manson. He dreaded hearing that he was no more in this world. The cold wintry weather, and the return to poor and spare nourishment caused by Richard's illness, must have been hard upon him! It was a continual sorrow to Richard that he had not been able to get him his new clothes before he was taken ill. So the first morning he felt it possible, he took his way to the city. There he learned that the company had dispensed with Arthur's services, because his attendance had become so irregular.

"You see, sir," said the porter, "the gov'nors they don't think no more of a man than they do of a horse: so long as he can hold the shafts up an' lean

agin the collar, he's money; when he can't no longer, he's dirt!"

Sad at heart, Richard set out for Clerkenwell. He was ill able for the journey, but Arthur was dying! He would brave the mother for the sake of the son! He got into an omnibus which took him a good part of the way, and walked the rest. When at length he looked up at the dreary house, he saw the blinds of the windows drawn down. A pang of fear went through his heart, and an infilial murmur awoke in his brain:—why was he, on whom those poor lives almost depended, made feeble as themselves, and incapable of helping them? After all his hoping and trusting, *could* there be a God in the earth and things go like that? The look of things seemed the truth of things; the seen denied the unseen. Cold and hunger and desertion; ugly, mocking failure; heartless comfort, and hopeless misery, made up the law of life! Moody and wretched he went up the stair to the darkened floor.

When he knocked at the front room, that in which Alice slept with her mother, it was opened by Alice, looking more small and forlorn than he had yet seen her, with hollower cheeks and larger eyes, and a smile to make an angel weep.

"Richard!" she cried, with a voice in which the very gladness sounded like pain. A pink flush rose in her poor wasted cheeks, and she lay still in his arms as if she had gone to live there.

He could not, for pity, speak one word.

"How ill you look!" she murmured. "I knew you must be ill! I thought you might be dead! Oh, God *is* good to leave you to us!" Then bursting into tears. "How wicked of me," she sobbed, "to

feel anything like gladness, with my mother lying there, and me not able to do anything for her, and not knowing what's to become of her, or how things are going with her!—We shall never see her again!"

"Don't say that, Alice! Never say *never* about anything except it be bad. You can't be *sure* you know. You can't be sure of anything that's not in your very mouth—and then sometimes you can't swallow it!—But how's Arthur?"

"He'll know all about it soon!" she answered, with a touch of bitterness. "If he had been left me, we should have got along somehow. He would have lain in bed, and I would have worked beside him! How I could have worked for *him!* But he's past hope now! He'll never get up again."

"O God," cried Richard in his heart, where an agony of will wrestled with doubt, "if thou art, thou wilt hear me, and take pity on her, and on us all!—I dare not pray, Alice," he went on aloud, "that he may live, but I will pray God to be with him. It would be poor kindness to want him left with us, if he is taking him where he will be well. May I go and see him?"

"Surely, Richard.—But mayn't I let him know first? The surprise might be too much for him."

Their talk had waked him, however, and he knew his brother's voice. "Richard! Richard!" he cried, so loud that it startled Alice: he had not spoken above a whisper for days. Richard opened his door, and went in. But when he saw Arthur, he could scarcely recognize him, he was so wasted. His eyes stood out like balls from his sunken cheeks, and the smile with which he greeted him was all teeth, like the helpless smile of a skull. Overcome with tenderness, the

stronger that he would have passed him in the street as one unknown, Richard stooped and kissed his forehead, then stood speechless, holding the thin leaf of a hand that strained his. Arthur tried to speak, but his cough came on, and his brother begged him to be silent.

"I will go into the next room with Alice," he said, "and come to you again. I shall see you often now, I hope. I've been ill or I should have been here fifty times."

In the next room lay the motionless form of the unmotherly mother. A certain something of human grace had returned to her countenance. Richard did not like looking at her; he felt that not loving her, he had no right to let his eyes rest on her. But she had been sinned against like his own mother: he must not fail her with what sympathy she might claim!

"Don't think hard things of her," said Alice, as if she knew what he was thinking, "She had not the strength of some people. I believe myself she could not help it. She had been used to everything she wanted!"

"I pity her heartily," answered Richard.

She threw her arms round his neck, and clung to him as if she would never more let him go.

"But what am I to do?" she said, releasing him. "If I stay at home to nurse Arthur, we must both die of hunger. If I go away, there is nobody to do anything for him!"

"I wish I could stay with him!" returned Richard. "But I've been so long ill that I have no money, and I don't know when I shall have any. I have just one shilling in my possession. Take it, dear."

"I can't take your last shilling, Richard!"

"There's no fear of me," he said; "I shall have everything I want. It makes me ashamed to think of it. You must just creep on for a while as best you can, while I think what to do. Only there's the funeral!"

Alice gave a cry choked by a sob.

"There is no help!" she said in a voice of despair. "The parish is all that is left us!"

"It don't matter much," rejoined Richard. "For my part I don't care a paring what becomes of my old clothes when I've done with them! You needn't think, whether she be anywhere or nowhere, that she cares how her body gets put under the earth! Don't trouble about it, Alice; it really is nothing. I would come to the funeral, but I don't see how I can. I don't know now what I shall say to my mother!—Tell Arthur I hope to see him again soon; I must not stop now. I won't forget you, Alice—not for an hour, I think. Beg some one in the house to go in to him now and then while you are away. I shall soon do something to cheer him up a bit. Good-night, dear!"

With a heavy heart Richard went. It was all he could do to get home before dark, having to walk all the way. His mother was much distressed to see him so exhausted; but he managed not to tell her what he had been about. He had some tea and went to bed, and there remained all the next day. And while he was in bed, it came to him clear and plain what he must do. It was certain that for a long time he could do nothing for Arthur and Alice out of his own pocket. Even if he got to work at once, he could not take his wages as before, seeing his parents had spent upon him almost all they had saved!

But there was one who *ought* to help them!

Specially in such sore need had they a right to the saving help of their own father! He would go to his father and their father—and as the words rose in his mind, he wondered where he had heard something like them before.

The next day he begged his father and mother to let him spend a week or two with his grandfather.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE CAVE IN THE FIRE.

THE day after, well wrapt from the cold, he took his place in a slow train, and at the station was heartily welcomed by his grandfather, who had come with his pony-cart to take him home. Settled in the room once occupied by Alice, he felt like a usurper, a robber of the helpless; he had left her in misery and wretchedness, and was in the heart of the comfort that had once been hers. He had to tell himself that it was foolish; that he was there for her sake.

He took his grandfather at once into his confidence, begging him not to let his mother know; and Simon, who had in former days experienced something of the hardness of his true-hearted daughter, entered into the thing with a brooding kind of smile. He saw no reason why Richard should not make the attempt, but shook his head at the prospect of success. Doubtless the baronet thought he had done all that could be required of him! He would have Richard rest a day before encountering him, but when he heard in what condition he had left Alice and her brother, he said no more, but the next morning had his trap ready to drive him to Mortgrange.

With feelings akin to none that he had ever before experienced, Richard drew near to the familiar place and looked again upon the familiar sights. The house that he had entered so often as a workman he now entered as a son. But what manner of son was

he, and how would he be received should he take it upon himself to disclose his identity? He had resolved, however, to say nothing, to do nothing, that should lead toward such a disclosure. He was there for another purpose, and, in the justice of the demand he was to make, he sunk all personal claims or desires.

Richard's heart beat fast as he passed through the lodge-gate, and walked up to the front door. After a moment's bewilderment, the servant who answered his ring recognized him, and expressed concern that he looked so ill. When he asked to see Sir Wilton, the man, thinking he came to resume the work so suddenly abandoned, said he was in the library, having his morning cigar.

"Then I'll just step in!" said Richard; and the footman gave way as to a member of the household.

Sir Wilton, now an elderly and broken man, sat in the same chair, and in the same attitude, as when Richard, a new-born and ugly child, had, in the arms of his aunt, his first interview with him, nearly one-and-twenty years before. The relation between them had not developed a hair's-breadth since that moment, and Richard, partly from the state of his health, could not, with all the courage he could gather, help quailing a little before the expected encounter; but he remained outwardly quiet and seemingly cool. The sun was not shining into the room, and it was rather dark. Sir Wilton sat with his back to the one large bay-window, and Richard received its light on his face as he entered. He stood an instant, hesitating. His father did not speak, but sat looking straight at him, staring indeed as at something portentous—much as when first he saw the

ugly apparition of his infant heir. Richard's illness had brought out, in the pallor and emaciation of his countenance, what likeness there was in him to his mother; and, strange to say, at the moment when the door opened to admit him, Sir Wilton was thinking of the monstrous baby his wife had left him, and wondering if the creature were still alive, and as hideous as twenty years before.

It was not *very* strange, however. Sir Wilton had been annoyed with his wife that morning, and it was yet a bitterer thing not to be able to hurt her in return, which, because of her cold imperturbability, was impossible, say what he might. As often, therefore, as he sat in silent irritation with her, the thought of his lost child never failed to present itself. What a power over her ladyship would he not possess, what a plough and harrow for her frozen equanimity, if only he knew where the heir to Mortgrange was! He was infernally ugly, but the uglier the better! If he but had him, he swore he would have a merry time, with his lady's pride on its marrow-bones! After so many years the poor lad might, ugly as he was, turn out presentable, and if so then, by heaven, that smooth-faced gentleman, Arthur, should shift for himself!

Suddenly appeared Richard, with his mother in his face; and before his father had time to settle what it could all mean, the apparition spoke.

"I am very sorry to intrude upon you, Sir Wilton," he said, "but——"

Here he paused.

"—But you've got something to tell me—eh?" suggested Sir Wilton. He was on the point of adding. "If it be where you got those eyes, I may

have to ask you to sit down!" but he checked himself, and said only, "You'd better make haste, then; for the devil is at the door in the shape of my cursed gout!"

"I came to tell you, Sir Wilton," replied Richard, plunging at once into the middle of things, which was indeed the best way with Sir Wilton, "about a son of yours——"

"What!" cried Sir Wilton, putting his hands on the arms of his chair and leaning forward as if on the point of rising to his feet. "Where is he? What do you know about him?"

"He is lying at the point of death—dying of hunger I may say."

"Rubbish!" cried the baronet, contemptuously. "You want to get money out of me! But you shan't!—not a shilling, not a penny!"

"I do want to get money from you, sir," said Richard. "I kept the poor fellow alive—kept him in dinners at least, him and his sister, till I fell ill and couldn't work."

At the word *sister* the baronet grew calmer. It was nothing about the lost heir! The other sort did not matter: they were no use against the enemy!

Richard paused. The baronet stared.

"I haven't a penny to call my own, or I should not have come to you," resumed Richard.

"I thought so! That's your orthodox style! But you've come to the wrong man!" returned Sir Wilton. "I never give anything to beggars."

He did not in the least doubt what he heard, but he scarcely knew what he answered—wondering where he had seen the fellow, and how he came to be so like his wife. The remembered ugliness of her

infant prevented all suggestion that this handsome fellow might be the same.

"You are the last man, Sir Wilton, from whom I would ask anything for myself," said Richard.

"Why so?"

Richard hesitated. To let him suspect the same claim in himself, would be fatal.

"I swear to you, Sir Wilton," he said, "by all that men count sacred, I come only to tell you that Arthur and Alice Manson, your son and daughter, are in dire want. Your son may be dead; he looked like it three days ago, and had no one to attend to him; his sister had to leave him to earn their next day's food. Their mother lay a corpse in the other of their two rooms."

"Oh! she's gone, is she? That alters the case. But what became of all the money I gave her? It was more than her body was worth; soul she never had!"

"She lost the money somehow, and her son and daughter starved themselves to keep her in plenty, so that by the time she died, they were all but dead themselves."

"A pair of fools."

"A good son and daughter, sir!"

"Attached to the young woman, eh?" asked the baronet, looking hard at him.

"Very much; but hardly more than to her brother," answered Richard. "God knows if I had but my strength," he cried, almost in despair, and suddenly shooting out his long thin arms, with his two hands, wasted white, at the ends of them, "I would work myself to the bone for them, and not ask you for a penny!"

"I provided for their mother!—why didn't they look after the money? *I'm* not accountable for *them!*"

"Ain't you accountable for giving the poor things a mother like that, sir?"

"By Jove, you have me there! She *was* a bad lot—a most infernal liar!—Young fellow, I don't know who you are, but I like your pluck! There aren't many I'd let stand talking at me like that! I'll give you something for the poor creatures—that is, mind you, if you've told me the truth about their mother! You're sure she's dead? Not a penny shall they have if she's alive!"

"I saw her dead, sir, with my own eyes."

"You're sure she wasn't shamming?"

"She couldn't have shammed anything so peaceful."

The baronet laughed.

"Believe me, sir," said Richard, "she's dead—and by this time buried by the parish."

"God bless my soul! Well, it's none of my fault!"

"She ate and drank her own children!" said Richard with a groan, for his strength was failing him. He sank into a chair.

"I will give you a check," said Sir Wilton, rising, and going to a writing-table in the window. "I will give you twenty pounds for them in the meantime—and then we'll see—we'll see!—that is," he added, turning to Richard, "if you swear by God that you have told me nothing but the truth!"

"I swear," said Richard, solemnly, "by all my hopes in God the saviour of men, that I have not wittingly uttered a word that is untrue or incorrect."

"That's enough. I'll give you the check."

He turned again to the table, sat down, searched for his keys, unlocked and drew out a drawer, took from it a check-book, and settled himself to write with deliberation, thinking all the time. When he had done:—

"Have the goodness to come and fetch your money," he said, tartly.

"With pleasure!" answered Richard, and went up to the table.

Sir Wilton turned on his seat, and looked him in the face, full in the eyes. Richard steadily encountered his gaze.

"What is your name?" said Sir Wilton at length. "I must make the check payable to you!"

"Richard Tuke, sir," answered Richard.

"What are you?"

"A bookbinder. I was here all the summer, sir, repairing your library."

"Oh! bless my soul!—Yes! that's what it was! I thought I had seen you somewhere! Why didn't you tell me so at first?"

"It had nothing to do with my coming now, and I did not imagine it of any interest to you, sir."

"It would have saved me the trouble of trying to remember where I had seen you!"

Then suddenly a light flashed across his face.

"By heaven," he muttered, "I understand it now! —They saw it—that look on his face!—By Jove!— But no; she never saw *her!*—She must have heard something about him then!—They didn't treat you well, I believe!" he said; "—turned you away at a moment's notice!—I hope they took that into consideration when they paid you?"

"I made no complaint, sir. I never asked why I was dismissed!"

"But they made it up to you—didn't they?"

"I don't submit to ill-usage, sir."

"That's right! I'm glad you made them pay for it!"

"To take money for ill-usage is to submit to it, it seems to me!" said Richard.

"By Jove, there are not many would call money ill-usage!—Well, it wasn't right, and I'll have nothing to do with it!—Here," he went on, wheeling round to the table, and drawing his check-book toward him, "I will give you another check for yourself."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Richard, "but I can take nothing for myself! Don't you see, sir?—As soon as I was gone, you would think I had after all come for my own sake!"

"I won't, I promise you. I think you a very honest fellow!"

"Then, sir, please continue to think me so, and don't offer me money!"

"Lest you should be tempted to take it?"

"No; lest I should annoy you by the use I made of it!"

"Tut, tut! I don't care what you do with it! You can't annoy me!"

He wrote a second check, blotted it, then finished the other, and held out both to Richard.

"I can't give you so much as the other poor beggars; you haven't the same claim upon me!" he said.

Richard took the checks, looked at them, put the

larger in his pocket, walked to the fire, and placed the other in the hottest cavern of it.

"By Jove!" cried the baronet, and again stared at him: he had seen his mother do precisely the same thing—with the same action, to the very turn of her hand, and with the same choice of the central gulf of fire!

Richard turned to Sir Wilton, and would have thanked him again on behalf of Alice and Arthur, but something got up in his throat, and, with a grateful look and a bend of the head, he made for the door speechless.

"I say, I say, my lad!" cried Sir Wilton, and Richard stopped.

"There's something in this," the baronet went on, "more than I understand! I would give a big check to know what is in your mind! What does it all mean?"

Richard looked at him, but said nothing: he was in some sort fascinated by the old man's gaze.

"Suppose now," said Sir Wilton, "I were to tell you I would do whatever you asked me so far as it was in my power—what would you say?"

"That I would ask you for nothing," answered Richard.

"I make the promise; I say solemnly that I will give you whatever you ask of me—provided I can do it honestly," said the baronet. And then the thought came to him, "What an infernal fool I am! The devil is in me to let the fellow walk over me like this! But I must know what it all means! I shall find some way out of it!"

For one moment the books around him seemed to

Richard to rush upon his brain like troops to the assault of a citadel; but the next he said:

"I can ask you for nothing whatever, sir; but I thank you from my heart for my poor friends, your children. Believe me, I am grateful."

With a lingering look at his father, he left the room.

CHAPTER L.

DUCK-FISTS.

THE godless old man was strangely moved. He rose, but instead of ringing the bell, hobbled after Richard to the door. As he opened it, however, he heard the hall-door close. He went to it, but by the time he reached it, the bookbinder had turned a corner of the house, to go by a back-way to the spot where his grandfather was waiting for him.

He found him in his cart, immovably expectant, his pony eating the grass at the edge of the road. Before he got his head pulled up, Richard was in the cart beside him.

"Drive on, grandfather," he panted in triumph. "I've got it!"

"Got what, lad?" returned the old man, with a flash in his eyes and a forward strain of his neck.

"What I wanted. Money. Twenty pounds."

"Bah! twenty pounds!" returned Simon with contempt, and a jerk of his head the other way.

He had himself noted Richard's likeness to his daughter, and imagined it impossible Sir Wilton should not also see it.

"But of course," he went on, "twenty pounds will be a large sum to them, and give them time to look about, and see what can be done. And now I'll tell you what, lad: if the young man is fit to be moved when you go back, you just bring him down

here—to the cottage, I mean—and it sha'n't cost him a ha'penny. I've a bit of a nest-egg as ain't chalk nor yet china ; and Jessie is going to be well married ; and who knows but the place may suit him as it did his sister ! You look to it when you get home."

"I will indeed, grandfather !—You're a good man, grandfather : the poor things are no blood of yours ! "

"Where's the odds o' that ! " grunted Simon. "I reckon it was your God and mine as made 'em ! "

Richard felt in his soul that, little reason as he had to be proud of his descent, he had at least one noble grandfather.

"You're a good man, grandfather ! " he repeated meditatively.

"Middlin'," returned the old man, laughing. "I'm not so good by a long chalk as my maker meant me, and I'm not so bad as the devil would have me. But if I were the powers that be, I wouldn't leave things as they are ! I'd have 'em a bit straightened out afore I died ! "

"That shows where you come from, Mr. Wingfold would say ; for that is just what God is always doing."

"I know the man ; I know your Mr. Wingfold ! Since you went, he's been more than once or twice to the smithy to ask after you. He's one o' the right sort, he is ! He's a man, he is !—not an old woman in breeches ! My soul ! why don't they walk and talk and look like men ? Most on 'em as I've seen are no more like men than if they was drawn on the wall with a coal ! If they was all like your Mr. Wingfold now ! Why, the devil wouldn't have a chance ! I've a soft heart for the clergy—always had, though every now and then they do turn me sick ! "

They were spinning along the road, half-way home, behind the little four-legged business in the shafts, when they became aware of a quick sharp trot behind them. Neither looked round; the blacksmith was minding his pony and the clergy, and the twenty pounds in Richard's heart were making it sing a new song. What a thing is money even, with God in it! The horseman came alongside the cart, and slackened his pace.

"Sir Wilton wants to see Mr. Tuke again," he said. "He made a mistake in the check he gave him."

An arrow of fear shot through Richard's heart. What did it mean! Was the precious thing going to be taken from him? Was his hope to be destroyed and his heart left desolate? He took the check from his pocket and examined it. Simon had pulled up his pony, and they were standing in the middle of the highway, the old man waiting his grandson's decision. Richard was not unaccustomed to checks in payment of his work, and he could see nothing amiss with the baronet's: it was made payable to bearer, and not crossed: Alice could take it to the bank and get the money for it! The next moment, however, he noted that it was payable at a branch-bank in the town of Barset, near Mortgrange. The baronet, he concluded, had, with more care than he would have expected of him, thought of this, and that it would cause trouble, so had sent his man to bring him back, that he might replace the check with one payable in London. His heart warmed toward his father.

"I see!" he said. "I'm sorry to give you the trouble, grandfather, but I'm afraid we must go!"

Simon turned the pony's head without a word, and

they went trotting briskly back to Mortgrange. Richard explained the matter as it seemed to him.

"I'm glad to find him so considerate!" said the old man. "It's a bad cheese that don't improve with age! Only men ain't cheeses!—If I'd brought up my girls better,——" he went on reflectively, but Richard interrupted him.

"You ain't going to hit my mother, grandfather!" said Richard.

"No, no, lad; I learned my manners better than that! Whatever I was going to say, I was thinking of my own faults and no one else's. But it's not possible we should be wise at the outset, and I trust the Maker will remember it. He'll be considerate, lad!—The Bible would call it *merciful*, but I don't care for parson-words! I like things that are true to sound true, just as any common honest man would say them!"

The moment he saw that Richard was indeed gone, the baronet swore to himself that the fellow was his own son. He was his mother all over!—anything but ugly, and far fitter to represent the family than the smooth-faced ape Lady Ann had presented him with! But a doubt came: his late wife had a sister somewhere, and a son of hers might have stolen a likeness to his lady-aunt! The tradesman fellow knew of the connection, and pretended to himself not to think much of it!

"What *are* we coming to, by Jove!" muttered the baronet. "The pride of the lower classes is growing portentous!—No, the fellow is none of mine," he concluded with a sigh.

Alas for his grip on Lady Ann! The pincers had melted in his grasp, and she was gone! It *was* a

pity! If he had been a better husband to poor Ruby, he would have taken better care of her child, ugly as he was, and would have had him now to plague Lady Ann! But stop! there was something odd about the child—something more than mere ugliness —something his nurse had shown him in that very room! By Jove! what was it? It had something to do with ducks, or geese, or swans, or pelicans! He had mentioned the thing to his wife, he knew, and she was sure to have remembered it! But he was not going to ask her! Very likely she had known the fellow by it, and therefore sent him out of the house!—Yes! Yes! by Jove! that was it! He had webs between his fingers and toes!—He might have got rid of them, no doubt, but he must see his hands!

All this passed swiftly through Sir Wilton's mind. He rang the library bell furiously, and sent a groom after the bookbinder.

They drove in at the gate, but stopped a little way from the house. Richard ran to the great door, found it open, and went straight to the library. There sat the baronet as at first.

"I bethought me," said Sir Wilton the moment he entered, "that I had given you a check on the branch at Barset, when it would probably suit you better to have one on headquarters in London!"

"It was very kind of you to think of it, sir," answered Richard.

"Kind! I don't know about that! I'm not often accused of that weakness!" returned Sir Wilton, rising with a grin—in which, however, there was more of humor than ill nature.

He went to the table in the window, sat down, un-

locked a drawer, took out a check-book, and began to write a check.

"What did you say was your name?" he asked; "these checks are all made to order, and I should prefer your drawing the money."

Richard gave him again the name he had always been known by.

"Tuke! What a beast of a name!" said the baronet. "How do you spell it?"

Richard's face flushed, but he would not willingly show anger with one who had granted the prayer of his sorest need. He spelled the name to him as unconcernedly as he could. But the baronet had a keen ear.

"Oh, you needn't be crusty!" he said. "I meant no harm. One has fancies about names, you know! What did they call your mother before she was married?"

Richard hesitated. He did not want Sir Wilton to know who he was. He felt that, the relation between them known by both, he must behave to his father in a way he would not like. But he must, nevertheless, speak the truth! Wherever he had not spoken the truth, he had repented, and been ashamed, and had now come to see that to tell a lie was to step out of the march of the ages led by the great will.

"Her name, sir, was Armour," he said.

"Hey!" cried the baronet with a start. Yet he had all but expected it.

"Yes, sir,—Jane Armour."

"Jane!" said his father with an accent of scorn. "—Not a bit of it!—*Jane!*" he repeated, and muttered to himself—"What motive could there be for

misinforming the boy as to the *Christian* name of his mother?"

For, the moment he saw the youth again, the spell was upon him afresh, and he felt all but certain he was his own.

Richard stood perplexed. Sir Wilton had taken his mother's name oddly for any supposition. He had said Mrs. Manson was a liar: might not her assertion of a relation between them be as groundless as it was spiteful? He had at once acknowledged the Mansons, but showed no recognition of himself on hearing his mother's name! There might be nothing in Mrs. Manson's story; he might after all be the son of John as well as of Jane Tuke! Only, alas, then, Alice and Arthur would not be his sister and brother! They would be God's children all the same, though, and he God's child! they would still be his brother and sister, to love and to keep!

"Here, put your name on the back there," said the baronet, having blotted the check. "I have made it payable to your order, and without your name it is worth nothing."

"It will be safer to indorse it at the bank, sir," returned Richard.

"I see you know what you're about!" grinned Sir Wilton—saying to himself, however, "The rascal will be too many for me!—But," he continued, "I see, too, you don't know how to sign your own name! I had better alter it to *bearer*, with my initials! Curse it all! your paltry check has given me more trouble than if it had been for ten thousand! Sit down there, will you, and write your name on that sheet of paper."

Richard knew the story of Talleyrand—how, giving his autograph to a lady, he wrote it at the top

left-hand corner of the sheet, so that she could write above or before it neither an order for money nor a promise of marriage: yielding to an absurd impulse, he did the same. The baronet burst into loud laughter, which, however, ceased abruptly: he had not gained his end!

"What comical duck-fists you've got!" he cried, risking the throw. "I once knew a man whose fingers and toes too were tied together that way! He swam like a duck!"

"My feet are more that way than my hands," replied Richard. "Only *some* of my fingers have got the web between them. My mother made me promise to put up with the monstrosity till I came of age. She seems to think some luck lay in it."

"Your mother!" murmured the baronet, and kept eying him. "By Jove," he said aloud, "your mother——! Who *is* your mother?"

"As I told you, sir, my mother's name is Jane Tuke!"

"Born Armour?"

"Yes, sir."

"By heaven!" said the baronet to himself, "I see it all now! That terrible nurse was one of the family—and carried him away because she didn't like the look of my lady! Don't I wish I had had half her insight! Perhaps she was cousin to Robina—perhaps her own sister! Simon, the villain, will know all about it!"

He sat silent for a moment.

"Hm!—Now tell me, you young rascal," he said, "why didn't you put in a claim for yourself instead of those confounded Mansons?"

"Why should I, sir? I didn't want anything. I

have all I desire—except a little more strength to work, and that is coming."

The baronet kept gazing at him with the strangest look on his wicked, handsome old face.

"There is something you *should* have asked me for!" he said at length, in a gentler tone.

"What is that, sir?"

"Your rights. You have a claim upon me before anyone else in the whole world!—I like you, too," he went on in yet gentler tone, with a touch of mockery in it. Apparently he still hesitated to commit himself. "I must do something for you!"

His son could contain himself no longer.

"I would ask nothing, I would take nothing," he said, as calmly as he could, though his voice trembled, and his heart throbbed with the beginnings of love, "from the man who had wronged my mother!"

"What do you mean, rascal?" the baronet burst out. "I never wronged your mother!—Who said I wronged your mother, you scoundrel? I'll take my oath *she* never did! Answer me directly who told you so!"

His voice had risen to a roar of anger.

His son could do the dead no wrong by speaking the truth.

"Mrs. Manson told me——" he began, but was not allowed to finish the sentence.

"Like the liar she always was!" cried the baronet—with such a fierceness in his growl as made Richard call to mind a certain bear in the Zoological Gardens. "Then it was she that had you stolen! The beast ought to have died on the gallows, not in her bed! Ah, she was the one to plot, the snake! In this whole curse of a world, *she* was the meanest devil I

ever came across, and I've known more than a few!"

"I know nothing about her, sir, except as the mother of Arthur, my schoolfellow. She seemed to hate me! She said I belonged to you, and had no right to be better off than her children!"

"How did she know you?"

"I can't tell, sir."

"You are like your mother, but that snake never can have set eyes on her!—Give me that check. Her fry sha'n't have a farthing! Let them rot alive with their dead dam!"

He held out his hand: the second check lay on the table, and Richard had the former still in his possession. He did not move, nor did Sir Wilton urge his demand.

"Did I not tell you?" he resumed. "Did I not say she was a liar? I never did your mother a wrong—nor you neither, though I did swear at you a bit, you were so infernally ugly. I don't blame you. You couldn't help it! Lord, what a display the woman made of your fingers and toes, as if the webs were something to be proud of, and atoned for the face!—Can you swim?"

"Fairly well, sir," answered Richard, carelessly.

"Your mother swam like a—Naiad, was it—or Nereid?—I forget—confound it!"

"I don't know the difference in their swimming."

"Nor any other difference, I dare say!"

"I know the one was a nymph of the sea, the other of a river."

"Oh! you know Greek, then?"

"I wish I did, sir; I was not long enough at school. I had to learn a trade and be independent."

"By Jove, I wish I knew a trade and was inde-

pendent! But you shall learn Greek, my boy! There will be some good in teaching *you!* *I* never learned anything!—But how the deuce do you know about Naiads and Nereids and all that bosh, if you don't know Greek?"

"I know my Keats, sir. I had to plough with his heifer, though—use my *Lempriere*, I mean!"

"Good heavens!" said the baronet, who knew as little of Keats as any Lap.—"I wish I had been content to take you with all your ugliness, and bring you up myself, instead of marrying Lot's widow!"

Richard fancied he preferred the bringing up he had, but he said nothing. Indeed he could make nothing of the whole business. How was it that, if Sir Wilton had done his mother no wrong, his mother was the wife of John Tuke? He was bewildered.

"You wouldn't like to learn Greek, then?" said his father.

"Yes, sir; indeed I should!"

"Why don't you say so then? I never saw such a block! I say you *shall* learn Greek!—Why do you stand there looking like a dead oyster?"

"I beg your pardon, sir! May I have the other check?"

"What other check?"

"The check there for my brother and sister, sir," answered Richard, pointing to it where the baronet had laid it, on the other side of him.

"Brother and sister."

"The Mansons, sir," persisted Richard.

"Oh, give them the check and be hanged to them! But remember they're no brother and sister of yours, and must never be alluded to as such, or as persons you have any knowledge of. When you've

given them that,"—he pointed to the check which still lay beside him—"you drop their acquaintance."

"That I cannot do, sir."

"There's a good beginning now! But I might have expected it!—You tell me to my face you won't do what I order you?"

"I can't, sir; it wouldn't be right."

"Fiddlesticks!—Wouldn't be right! What's that to you? It's my business. You've got to do what I tell you."

"I must go by my conscience, sir."

"Oh, hang your conscience! Will you promise, or will you not? You're to have nothing to say to those young persons."

"I will not promise."

"Not if I promise to look after them?"

"No, sir."

His father was silent for a moment, regarding him —not all in anger.

"Well, you're a good-plucked one, I allow! But you're the greatest fool, the dullest young ass out, notwithstanding. You won't suit me—though you are web-footed!—Why, hang it, boy! don't you understand yet that I'm your father?"

"Mrs. Manson told me so, sir."

"Oh, rot Mrs. Manson! she told you a lie! She told you I wronged your mother! I tell you I married her! What a blockhead you are! Look there, with your miserable tradesman's eyes: all those books will be yours one day!—to put in the fire if you like, or mend at from morning to night, just as you choose! You fool! Ain't you my son, heir to Mortgrange, and whatever I may choose to give you besides!"

Richard's heart gave a bound as if it would leap to heaven. It was not the land; it was not the money; it was not the books; it was not even Barbara; it was Arthur and Alice that made it bound. But the voice of his father went on.

"You know now, you idiot," it said, "why you can have nothing more to do with that cursed litter of Mansons!"

Richard's heart rose to meet the heartlessness of his father.

"They are my brother and sister, sir!" he said.

"And what does it matter to you if they are! That's my business, not yours! You had nothing to do with it! You didn't make the Mansons!"

"No, sir; but God made us all, and says we're to love our brethren."

"Now don't you come the pious over me! It won't pay here! Mind you, nobody heard me acknowledge you! By the mighty heavens, I will deny knowing anything about you! You'll have to prove to the court of chancery that you're my son, born in wedlock, and kidnapped in infancy: by Jove, you'll find it stiff! Who'll advance you the money to carry it there—you can't do it without money? Nobody; the property's not entailed, and who cares whether it be Sir Richard or Sir Arthur? What's the title without the property! But don't imagine I should mind telling a lie to keep the two together. I'm not a nice man; I don't mind lying! I'm a bad man!—that I know better than you or any one else, and you'll find it uncomfortable to differ and deal with me both at once!"

"I will not deny my own flesh and blood," said Richard.

"Then I will deny mine, and you may go rot with them."

"I will work for them and myself," said Richard.

Sir Wilton glared at him. Richard made a stride to the table. The baronet caught up the check. Richard darted forward to seize it. Was his truth to his friends to be the death of them? He *would* have the money! It was his! He had told him to take it!

What might have followed I dare not think. Richard's hands were out to lay hold on his father, when happily he remembered that he had not given him back the former check, and Barset was quite within reach of his grandfather's pony! He turned and made for the door. Sir Wilton read his thought.

"Give me that check," he cried, and hobbled to the bell.

Richard glanced at the lock of the door: there was no key in it! Besides, there were two more doors to the room! He darted out: there was the man, far off down the passage, coming to answer the bell! He hastened to meet him.

"Jacob," he said, "Sir Wilton rang for you: just run down with me to the gate, and give the woman there a message for me."

He hurried to the door, and the man, nothing doubting, followed him.

"Tell her," said Richard as they went, "if she should see Mr. Wingfold pass, to ask him to call at old Armour's smithy. She does not seem to remember me! Good-day! I'm in a hurry!"

He leaped into the pony-cart.

"Barset!" he cried, and the same moment they

were off at speed, for Simon saw something fresh was up.

"Drive like Jehu," panted Richard. "Let's see what the blessed pony can do! Every instant is precious."

Never asking the cause of his haste, old Simon did drive like Jehu, and never had the pony gone with a better will: evidently he believed speed was wanted, and knew he had it to give.

No hoofs came clamping on the road behind them. They reached the town in safety, and Richard cashed his check—the more easily that Simon, a well-known man in Barset, was seen waiting for him in his trap outside. The eager, anxious look of Richard, and the way he clutched at the notes, might otherwise have waked suspicion. As it was, it only waked curiosity.

When the man whom Richard had decoyed, appeared at length before his master, whose repeated ringing had brought the butler first; and when Sir Wilton, after much swearing on his, and bewilderment on the man's part, made out the trick played on him, his wrath began to evaporate in amusement: he was outwitted and outmanœuvred—but by his own son! and even in the face of such an early outbreak of hostilities, he could not help being proud of him. He burst into a half cynical laugh, and dismissed the men—to vain speculation on the meaning of the affair.

Simon would have had Richard send the bank-notes by post, and stay with him a week or two; but Richard must take them himself; no other way seemed safe. Nor could he possibly rest until he had seen his mother, and told her all. He said nothing to his grandfather of his recognition by Sir Wil-

ton, and what followed: he feared he might take the thing in his own hands, and go to Sir Wilton.

Questioning his grandfather, he learned that Barbara was at home, but that he had seen her only once. She had one day appeared suddenly at the smithy door, with Miss Brown all in a foam. She asked about Richard, wheeled her mare, and was off homeward, straight as an arrow—for he went to the corner, and looked after her.

They were near a station at Barset, and a train was almost due. Simon drove him there straight from the bank, and before he was home, Richard was halfway to London.

Short as was his visit, he had got from it not merely all he had hoped, but almost all he needed. His weakness had left him; he had twenty pounds for his brother and sister; and his mother was cleared, though he could not yet tell how: was he not also a little step nearer to Barbara? True, he was disowned, but he had lived without his father hitherto, and could very well go on to live without such a father! As long as he did what was right, the right was on his side! As long as he gave others their rights, he could waive his own! A fellow was not bound, he said, to insist on his rights—at least he had not met with any he was bound to insist upon. Borne swiftly back to London, his heart seemed rushing in the might of its gladness to console the heavy-laden hearts of Alice and Arthur. Twenty pounds was a great sum to carry them! He could indeed himself earn such a sum in a little while, but how long would it not take him to save as much! Here it was, whole and free, present and potent, ready to be turned at once into food and warmth and hope!

CHAPTER LI.

BARONET AND BLACKSMITH.

THE more Sir Wilton's anger subsided, the more his heart turned to Richard, and the more he regretted that he had begun by quarrelling with him. Sir Wilton loved his ease, and was not a quarrelsome man. He could dislike intensely, he could hate heartily, but he seldom quarrelled; and if he could have foreseen how his son would take the demand he made upon him, he would not at the outset have risked it. He liked Richard's looks and carriage. He liked also his spirit and determination, though his first experience of them he could have wished different. He felt also that very little would make of him a man fit to show to the world and be proud of as his son. To his satisfaction on these grounds was added besides a peculiar pleasure in the discovery of him which he could ask no one to share—that it was to him as a lump of dynamite under his wife's lounge, of which no one knew but himself, and which he could at any instant explode. It was sweet to know what he *could* do! to be aware, and alone aware, of the fool's paradise in which my lady and her brood lived! And already, through his own precipitation, his precious secret was in peril!

The fact gave him not a little uneasiness. His thought was, at the ripest moment of her frosty indifference, to make her palace of ice fly in flinders about her. Then the delight of her perturbation! And he had opened his hand and let his bird fly!

His father did not know Richard's prudence. Like the fool every man of the world is, he judged from Richard's greatness of heart, and his refusal to forsake his friends, that he was a careless, happy-go-lucky sort of fellow, who would bluster and protest. As to the march he had stolen upon him on behalf of the Mansons, he nowise resented that. When pressed by no selfish *necessity*, he did not care much about money; and his son's promptitude greatly pleased him.

"The fellow shall go to college," he said to himself; "and I won't give my lady even a hint before I have him the finest gentleman and the best scholar in the county! He shall be both! I will teach him billiards myself! By Jove! it is more of a pleasure than at my years I had a right to expect! To think of an old sinner like me being blessed with such a victory over his worst enemy! It is more than I could deserve if I lived to the age of Mephistopheles —or Methuselah—or whatever his name was! I shouldn't like to live so long—there's so little worth remembering! I wish forgetting things wiped them out! There are things I hardly know whether I did or only wanted to do!—Hang it, it may be all over Barset by this time, that the heir to Sir Wilton's property has turned up!"

He rang the bell, and ordered his carriage.

"I must see the old fellow, the rascal's grandfather!" he kept on to himself. "I haven't exchanged a word with him for years! And now I think of it, I take poor Robina's father for a very decent sort of fellow! If he had but once hinted what he was, every soul in the parish would have known it! I *must* find out whether he's in my

secret! I can't *prove* it yet, but perhaps he can!"

Simon Armour was not astonished to see the Lestrange carriage stop at the smithy: he thought Sir Wilton had come about the check. He went out, and stood in hairy arms and leather apron at the carriage door.

"Well, Armour, how are you?" said the baronet.

"Well and hearty, sir, I thank you," answered Simon.

"I want a word with you," said Sir Wilton.

"Shall I tell the coachman to drive round to the cottage, sir?"

"No; I'll get out and walk there with you."

Simon opened the carriage-door, and the baronet got out.

"That grandson of yours——" he began, the moment they were in Simon's little parlor.

Simon started. "The old wretch knows!" he said to himself.

"—has been too much for me!" continued Sir Wilton. "He got a check out of me whether I would or not!"

"And got the money for it, sir!" answered the smith. "He seemed to think the money better than the check!"

"I don't blame him, by Jove! There's decision in the fellow!—They say his father's a bookbinder in London!"

"Yes, sir."

"You know better! I don't want humbug, Armour! I'm not fond of it!"

"You told me people said his father was a bookbinder, and I said 'Yes, sir'!"

"You know as well as I do it's all a lie! The boy

is mine. He belongs neither to bookbinder nor blacksmith!"

"You'll allow me a small share in him, I hope! I've done more for him than you, sir.",

"That's not my fault!"

"Perhaps not; but I've done more for him than you ever will, sir!"

"How do you make that out?"

"I've made him as good a shoesmith as ever drove nail! I don't say he's up to his grandfather at the anvil yet, but——"

"An accomplishment no doubt, but not exactly necessary to a gentleman!"

"It's better than dicing or card-playing!" said the blacksmith.

"You're right there! I hope he has learned neither. I want to teach him those things myself.—He's not an ill-looking fellow!"

"There's not a better lad in England, sir! If you had brought him up as he is, you might ha' been proud o' your work!"

"*He* seems proud of somebody's work!—prouder of himself than his prospects, by Jove!" said Sir Wilton, feeling his way. "You should have taught him not to quarrel with his bread and butter!"

"I never saw any call to teach him that. He never quarrelled with anything at my table, sir. A man who has earned his own bread and butter ever since he left school, is not likely to quarrel with it."

"You don't say *he* has done so?"

"I do—and can prove it!—Did you tell him, sir, you were his father?"

"Of course I did!—and before I said another word,

there we were quarrelling—just as it was with me and my father!"

"He never told me!" said Simon, half to himself, and ready to feel hurt.

"He didn't tell you?"

"No, sir."

"Where is he?"

"Gone to London with your bounty."

"Now, Simon Armour," began the baronet with some truculence.

"Now, Sir Wilton Lestrange!" interrupted Simon. "What's the matter?"

"Please to remember you are in my house!"

"Tut, tut! All I want to say is that you will spoil everything if you encourage the rascal to keep low company!"

"You mean?"

"Those Mansons."

"Are your children low company, sir?"

"Yes; I am sorry, but I must admit it. Their mother was low company."

"She was in it at least, when she was in yours!" had all but escaped Simon's lips, but he caught the bird by the tail.—"The children are not the mother!" he said. "I know the girl, and she is anything but low company. She lay ill in my house here for six weeks or more. Ask Miss Wylder.—If you want to be on good terms with your son, don't say a word, sir, against your daughter or her brother."

"I like that! On good terms with my son! Ha, ha!"

"Remember, sir, he is independent of his father."

"Independent! A beggarly bookbinder!"

"Excuse me, sir, but an honest trade is the only

independence! You are dependent on your money and your land. Where would you be without them? And you made neither! They're yours only in a way! We, my grandson and I, have means of our own," said the blacksmith, and held out his two brawny hands. "—The thing that is beggarly," he resumed, "is to take all and give nothing. If your ancestors got the land by any good they did, you did not get it by any good you did; and having got it, what have you done in return?" .

"By Jove! I didn't know you were such a radical!" returned the baronet, laughing.

"It is such as you, sir, that make what you call radicals. If the landlords had used what was given them to good ends, there would be no radicals—or not many—in the country! The landlords that look to their land and those that are on it, earn their bread as hardly as the man that ploughs it. But when you call it yours, and do nothing for it, I am radical enough to think no wrong would be done if you were deprived of it!"

"What! are you taking to the highway at your age?"

"No, sir; I have a trade I like better, and have no call to lighten you of anything, however ill you may use it. But there are those that think they have a right *and* a call to take the land from landlords like you, and I would no more leave my work to prevent them than I would to help them."

"Well, well! I didn't come to talk politics: I came to ask a favor of you."

"What I can do for you, sir, I shall be glad to do."

"It is merely this—that you will, for the present, say nothing about the heir having turned up."

"I could have laid my hand on him any moment this twenty years; and I can tell you where to find the parish book with his baptism in it! That I've not spoken proves I can hold my tongue; but I will give no pledge; when the time comes I will speak."

"Are you aware I could have you severely punished for concealing the thing?"

"Fire away. I'll take my chance. But I would advise you not to allow the thing come into court. Words might be spoken that would hurt! I *know* nothing myself, but there is one that could and would speak. Better let sleeping dogs lie."

"Oh, hang it! I don't want to wake 'em! Most old stories are best forgotten. But what do you think: will the boy—What's his name?"

"My father's, sir,—Richard."

"Will Richard, then, as you have taken upon you to call him,——"

"His mother gave him the name."

"What I want to know is, whether you think he will go and spread the thing, or leave it to me to publish when I please."

"Did you tell him to hold his tongue?"

"No; he didn't give me time."

"That's a pity! He would have done whatever you asked him."

"Oh! would he?"

"He would —so long as it was a right thing."

"And who was to judge of that?"

"Why, the man who had to do it or leave it, of course!—But if he didn't tell me, he's not likely to go blazing it abroad!"

"You said he would go to his mother first: his mother is nowhere."

"So say some, so say not I!"

"Never mind that. Who is it he calls his mother?"

"The woman that brought him up—and a good mother she's been to him!"

"But who is she? You haven't told me who she is!" cried the baronet, beginning to grow impatient, and impatience and anger were never far apart with him.

"No, sir, I haven't told you; and I don't mean to tell you till I see fit."

"And when, pray, will that be?"

"When I have your promise in writing that you will give her no trouble about what is past and gone."

"I will give you that promise—always provided she can prove that what was past and gone is come again. I shall insist upon that!"

"Most properly, sir! You shall not have to wait for it.—And now, if you will take me to the post-office, I will send a telegram to Richard, warning him to hold his tongue."

"Good! Come."

They walked to the carriage, and Simon, displacing the footman, got up beside the coachman. He was careful, however, to be set down before they got within sight of the post-office.

The message he sent was:

"I know all, and will write. Say nothing but to your mother."

CHAPTER LII.

UNCLE-FATHER AND AUNT-MOTHER.

When Richard reached London, he went straight to Clerkenwell. There he found Arthur, in bed and unattended, but covered up warm. Except one number of *The Family Herald*, he had nothing to read. The room was tidy, but very dreary. Richard asked him why he did not move into the front room. Arthur did not explain, but Richard understood that the mother had left so many phantasms behind her that he preferred his own dark chamber. When Richard told him what he had done and the success he had had, he thanked him with such a shining face that Richard saw in it the birth of saving hope.

"And now, Arthur," he said, "you must get better as fast as you can; and the first minute you are able to be moved, we'll ship you off to my grandfather's, where Alice was."

"Away from Alice?"

"Yes; but you must remember there will be so much more for her to eat, and so much more money to get things comfortable with by the time you come back. Besides, you will grow well faster, and then perhaps we shall find some fitter work for you than that hideous clerking!"

The flush of joy on Arthur's cheek was a divine reward to Richard for what he had done and suffered and sacrificed for the sake of his brother. He made

a fire, and having set on the kettle, went to buy some things, that he might have a nice supper ready for Alice when she came home. Next he found two clean towels, and covered the little table, forgetting all his troubles in the gladness of ministration, and the new life that hope gives. If only we believed in God, how we should hope! And what would not hope do to reveal the new heavens and the new earth —that is, to show us the real, true and gracious aspect of those heavens and that earth in which we now live so sadly, and are not at home, because we do not see them as they are, do not recognize in them the beginning of the inheritance we long for!

When Alice came in, she heard Arthur cough, and hurried up; but before she reached the top of the second stair, she heard a laugh which, though feeble, was of such merry enjoyment, that it filled her with wonder and gladness. Had the fairy godmother appeared at last? What could have come to make Arthur laugh like that? She opened the door, and all was explained: there sat the one joy of their life, their brother Richard, looking much like himself again! What a healer, what a strength-giver is joy! Will not holy joy at last drive out every disease in the world? Will it not be the elixir of life, and drive out death? She sprang upon him, and burst out weeping.

"Come and have supper," he said. "I've been out to buy it, and haven't much time to help you eat it. My father and mother don't know where I am."

Then he told her what he had been about.

It was with a happy heart he made his way home, for he left happy hearts behind him.

He wondered that his mother was not surprised to

see him—wondered too why she looked so troubled.

"What does this telegram mean?" she asked.

"I don't know, mother," he replied. "Won't you give me a kiss first?"

She threw her arms about him.

"You won't give up saying *mother* to me, will you?" she pleaded, fighting with her emotion.

"It will be a bad day for me when I do!" he answered. "My mother you are and shall be. But I don't understand it!"

The telegram let him know that Sir Wilton and his grandfather had been in communication, and gave him hope that things might be accommodated between him and his father.

"You've got your real father now, Richard!" said his mother.

But she saw an expression on his face that made her add,—

"You must respect your father, Richard—now you know him for your father."

"I can't respect him, mother. He is not a good man. I can only love him."

"You have no right to find fault with him. He was not to blame that I carried you away when your mother died! I was terrified at your stepmother!"

"I don't wonder at that, mother!—Ah, now I begin to understand it all!—But, mother, if my father had been a good man, I don't believe you would have carried me away from him!"

"Very likely not, my boy—though he did make me that angry by calling you ugly! And I don't believe I should have taken you at all, if that woman hadn't sent me away for no reason but to have a nurse of her choosing. How could I leave my sister's child

in the power of such a woman! Day and night, Richard, was I haunted with the sight of her cold face hanging over you. I was certain the devil might have his way with her when he chose: there was no love in her to prevent him. In my dreams I saw her giving you poison, or with a penknife in her hand, and her eyes shining like ice. I could *not* bear it. I should have gone mad to leave you there. I knew I was committing a crime in the eyes of the law; but I felt a stronger law compelling me; and I said to myself, 'I will be hanged for my child, rather than my child should be murdered! I will *not* leave him with that woman!' So I took you, Richard!"

"Thank you, mother, a thousand times! I am sure it was right, and every way best for me! Oh, how much I owe you and my—uncle! I must call you *mother* still, but I'm afraid I shall have to call my father *uncle!*"

"It won't hurt him, Richard; he has been a good uncle to you, but I don't think he would have taught you the things he did, if you had been his very own child!"

"He has done me no harm, mother,—nothing but good," said Richard. "—And so you are my own mother's sister?"

"Yes, and a good mother she would have been to you! You must not think of her as a grim old woman like me! She was but six-and-twenty when you were born and she died! She was the most beautiful woman *I* ever saw, Richard!—Never another woman's hand has touched your body but hers and mine, Richard!"

He took her hand and kissed it. Jane Tuke had

never had her hand kissed before, and would have drawn it away. The lady within was ashamed of her rough gloves, not knowing they had won her her ladyhood. In the real world, there are no ladies but true women. Also they only are beautiful. All there show what they are, and the others are all more or less deformed. Oh, what lovely ladies will walk into the next world out of the rough cocoon of their hard-wrought bodies—not because they have been working women, but because they have been true women. Among working women as among countesses, there are last that shall be first, and first that shall be last. *What kind of woman* will be the question. Alas for those, whether high or low or in the middle, whose business in life has been to be ladies! What poor, mean, draggled, unangelic things will come crawling out of the husk they are leaving behind them, which yet, perhaps, will show a glimmer, in the whiteness of death, of what they were meant to be, if only they had lived, had *been*, had put forth the power that was in them as their birthright! Not a few I know will crawl out such, except they awake from the dead and cry for life. Perhaps one and another in the next world will say to me, "You meant me! I know now why you were always saying such things!" For I suspect the next world will more plainly be a going on with this than most people think—only it will be much better for some, and much worse for others, as the Lord has taught us in the parable of the rich man and the beggar.

"No, Richard," resumed his aunt, "your father was not a good man, but he may be better now, and perhaps you will help him to be better still."

"It's doubtful if ever I have the chance," returned

Richard. "We've had a pretty fair quarrel already!"

"He can't take your birthright from you!" she cried.

"That may be—but what *is* my birthright? He told me the land was not entailed; he can leave it to anybody he likes. But I'm not going to do what he would have me do—that is, if it be wrong," added Richard, not willing to start the question about the Mansons. "To be a sneak would be a fine beginning! If that's to be a gentleman, I will be no gentleman!"

"Right you are, my son!" said Tuke, who that moment came in.

"Oh, uncle!" cried Richard, starting to his feet.

"*Uncle!*—Ho! ho! What's up now?"

"Nothing's up, but all's out, father!" answered Richard, putting his hand in that of the bookbinder. "You knew, and now I know! How shall I ever thank you for what you have done for me, and been to me, and given me!"

"Precious little anyway, my boy! I wish it had been a great deal more."

"Shall I tell you what you have done for me?—You made a man of me first of all, by giving me a trade, and making me independent. Then again, by that trade you taught me to love the very shape of a book. Baronet or no baronet——"

"What do you mean?"

"My father threatens to disown me."

"He can't take your rank from you. We'll have you Sir Richard anyhow!—An' I'd let 'em see that a true baronet——"

"—is just a true man, uncle!" interposed Richard;

"and that you've helped to make me. It's being independent and helping others, not being a baronet, that will make a gentleman of me! That's how it goes in the true world anyhow!"

"The *true* world! Where's that?" rejoined Tuke, with what would have been a sneer had there been ill-nature in it.

"And that reminds me of another precious thing you've given me," Richard went on: "you've taught me to think for myself!"

"Think for yourself indeed, and talk of any world but the world we've got!"

"If you hadn't taught me," returned Richard, "to think for myself, I should have thought just as you did. But I've been thinking for myself a great deal, and I say now, that, if there be no more of it after we die, then the whole thing is such a sell as even the dumb, deaf, blind, heartless, headless God you seem to believe in could not have been guilty of!"

"Ho! ho!—that's the good my teaching has done you? Well, we'll have it out by and by! In the meantime, tell us how it all came about—how you came to know, I mean. You're a good sort, whatever you believe or don't believe, and I wish you were ours in reality!"

"It's just in reality that I am yours!" protested Richard; but his mother broke in:

"Would you dare, John," she cried, "to wish him ours to his loss?"

"No, no, Jane! You know me! It was but a touch of what you call the old Adam—and I the old John! We've got to take care of each other! We're all agreed about that!"

"And you do it, father, and that's before any agreeing about it!"

"Come and let's have our tea!" said the mother; "and Richard shall tell us how it worked round that the old gentleman knew him. I remember him young enough to be no bad match for your mother, and that's enough to say for any man—as to looks, I mean only. There wasn't a more beautiful woman than my sister Robina in all England—and I'm bold to say it—not that it wants much boldness to say the truth!"

"It wants nearly as much at this moment as I have got," returned Richard; for his narrative required, as an essential part of it, that he should tell what had made him go to his father.

He had but begun when a black cloud rose on his mother's face, and she almost started from her seat.

"I told you Richard, you were to have nothing to do with those creatures!" she cried.

"Mother," answered Richard, "was it God or the devil told me I must be neighbor to my own brother and sister? Hasn't my father done them wrong enough that you should side with him and want me to carry on the wrong? I heard the same voice that made you run away with me. You were ready to be hanged for me; I was ready to lose my father for them. He too said I must have done with them, and I told him I wouldn't. That was why I got you to put me on journeyman's wages, uncle. They were starving, and I had nothing to give them. What am I in the world for, if not to set right, so far as I may, what my father has set wrong? You see I *have* learned something of you, uncle!"

"I don't see what," returned Tuke.

He had been listening with a grave face, for he had his pride, and did not relish his nephew's being hand and glove with his base-born brother and sister.

"Don't you, father? Where's your socialism? I'm only trying to carry it out."

"Out and away, my boy, as Samson did the gates in my mother's old Bible!" answered John.

"If a man's socialism don't apply to his own flesh and blood," resumed Richard, "where on earth is it to begin? Must you hate your own flesh, and go to Russia or China for somebody to be fair to? Ain't your own got as good a right to fair play as any, and ain't they the readiest to begin with? Is it selfish to help your own? It ain't the way you've done by me, uncle!"

"You mustn't forget," said John, "that a grave wrong is done the nation when marriage is treated with disrespect."

"It was my father did that! Was it Alice and Arthur that broke the marriage-law by being born out of wedlock?"

"If you treat them like other people, you slight that law."

"If Sir Wilton Lestrange were to come into the room this minute, you would offer him a chair; his children you would order out of the house!"

"I wouldn't do that," said Mrs. Tuke.

"Mother, you turned them out of the house!—I beg your pardon, mother, but you know it was the same thing! You visited the sins of the father on the children!"

"Bravo!" cried his uncle; "I thought you couldn't mean the rot!"

"What rot, father?"

"That rot about God you flung at me first thing."

"Father, it would take the life out of me to believe there was no God; but the God I hope in is a different person from the God my mother's clergy have taught her to believe in. Father, do you know Jesus Christ?"

"I know the person you mean, my boy."

"I know what *kind* of person he is, and he said God was just like him, and in the God like him, if I can find him, I will believe with all my heart and soul—and so would you, father, if you knew him. You will say, perhaps, he ain't nowhere *to* know! but you haven't a right to say that until you've been everywhere to look; for such a God is no absurdity; it's nothing ridiculous to look for him. I beg your pardon, both of you, but I'm bound to speak. Jesus Christ said we must leave father and mother for him, because he is true; and I must speak for him what is true, even if my own father and mother should think me rude."

He had spoken eagerly; and man or woman who does not put truth first, may think he ought to have held his tongue. But neither father nor mother took offence. The mother, unspeakably relieved by what had taken place, was even ready to allow that her favorite preacher might "perhaps dwell too much upon the terrors of the law."

CHAPTER LIII.

MORNING.

THE next post brought a letter from Simon Armour, saying, after his own peculiar fashion, that it was time the thing were properly understood between the parties concerned; but, that done, they must attend to the baronet's wish, and disclose nothing yet: he believed Sir Wilton had his reasons. They must therefore, as soon as possible, make it clear to him that there was no break in the chain of their proof of Richard's identity. He proposed, therefore, that his daughter should pay her father a visit, and bring Richard.

The suggestion seemed good to all concerned. Criminal as she knew herself, Jane Tuke did not shrink from again facing Sir Wilton, with the nephew by her side whom one and twenty years before she had carried in her arms to meet his unfatherly gaze! To her surprise she found that she almost enjoyed the idea.

Richard cashed the post-office-order the old man sent them, and they set out for his cottage.

The same day Simon went to Mortgrange and saw the baronet, who agreed at once to go to the cottage to meet his sister-in-law.

The moment he entered the little parlor where they waited to receive him, he made Mrs. Tuke a polite bow, and held out his hand.

"You are the sister of my late wife, I am told," he said.

Jane made him a dignified courtesy, her resentment, after the lapse of twenty years, rising fresh at at sight of the man who had behaved so badly to her sister.

"It was you that carried off the child?" said the baronet.

"Yes, sir," answered Jane.

"I am glad I did not know where to look for him. You did me the greatest possible favor. What these twenty years would have been like, with him in the house, I dare not think."

"It was for the child's sake I did it!" said Jane.

"I am perfectly aware it was not for mine!" returned Sir Wilton. "Ha! ha! you looked as if you had come to stab me that day you brought the little object to the library, and gave me such a scare! You presented his fingers and toes to me as if, by Jove, I was the devil, and had made them so on purpose!—I tell you, Richard, if that's your name, you rascal, you have as little idea what a preposterously ugly creature you were, as I had that you would ever grow to be—well, half-fit to look at! I was appalled at the sight of you! And a good thing it was! If I had taken to you, and brought you up at home, it would scarcely have been to your advantage. You would have been worth less than you are, however little that may be! But it doesn't follow you're the least fit to be owned to! You're a tradesman, every inch of you—no more like a gentleman than—well, not half so like a gentleman as your grandfather there! By heaven, the anvil must be some sort of education! Why wasn't *I* bound

apprentice to my old friend Simon there! But, Richard, you don't look a gentleman, though your aunt looks as if she would eat me for saying it.—Now listen to me—all of you. It's no use your saying I've acknowledged him. If I choose to say I know nothing about him, then, as I told the rascal himself the other day, you'll have to prove your case, and that will take money! and when you've proved it, you get nothing but the title, and much good that will do you! So you had better make up all your minds to do as I tell you—that is, not to say one word about the affair, but just hold your tongues.—Now none of that looking at one another, as if I meant to do you! I'm not going to have people say my son shows the tradesman in him! I'm not going to have the Lestranges knock under to the Armours! I'm going to have the rascal the gentleman I can make him!—You're to go to college directly, sir; and I don't want to hear of or from you till you've taken your degree! You shall have two hundred a year and pay your own fees—not a penny more if you go on your marrow-bones for it!—You understand? You're not to attempt communicating with me. If there's anything I ought to know, let your grandfather come to me. I will see him when he pleases—or go to him, if he prefers it, and I'm not too gouty. Only, mind, I make no promises! If I should leave all I have to the other lot, you will have no right to complain. With the education I will give you, and the independence your uncle has given you, and the good sense you have on your own hook, you're provided for. You can be a doctor or a parson, you know. There's more than one living in my gift. The Reverend Sir Richard Lestrange!—it don't sound

amiss. I'm sorry I shan't hear it. I shall be gone where they crop one of everything—even of his good works, the parsons say, but I shan't be much the barer for that! It's hard—confounded hard, though, when they're all a fellow has got!—Now don't say a word! I don't like being contradicted!—not at all! It sends one round on the other tack, I tell you—and there's my gout coming! Only mind this: if once you say who you are as long as you're at college, or before I give you leave, I have done with you. I won't have any little plan of mine forestalled for your vanity! Don't any of you say who he is. It will be better for him—much. If it be but hinted who he is, he'll be courted and flattered, and then he'll be stuck up, and take to spending money! But, remember this, if he goes beyond his allowance—well, I'll pay it, but it shall be his last day at Oxford. He shall go at once into the navy—or the excise, by George!"

This expression of the baronet's will, if not quite to the satisfaction of every one concerned, was altogether delightful to Richard.

"May I say one word, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, if it's not arguing."

"I've not read a page of Latin since I left school, and I never knew any Greek."

"Oh! ah! I forgot that predicament! You must have a tutor to prepare you!—but you shall go to Oxford with him. I will *not* have you loafing about here! You may remain with your grandfather till I find one, but you're not to come near Mortgrange."

"I may go to London with my mother, may I not?" said Richard.

"I see nothing against that. It will be the better way."

"If you please, Sir Wilton," said Mrs. Tuke, "I left evidence at Mortgrange of what I should have to say."

"What sort of evidence?"

"Things that belonged to the child and myself."

"Where?"

"Hid in the nursery."

"My lady had everything moved, and the room fresh-papered after you left. I remember that distinctly."

"Did she say nothing about finding anything?"

"Nothing.—Of course she wouldn't!"

"I left a box of my own, with——"

"You'll never see it again."

"The things the child always wore when he went out, were under the wardrobe."

"Oblige me by saying nothing about them. I am perfectly satisfied, and believe every word you say. I believe Richard there the child of your sister Robina and myself; and it shall not be my fault if he don't have his rights! At the same time I promise nothing, and will manage things as I see best."

"At your pleasure, sir!" answered Mrs. Tuke.

"Should you mind, sir, if I went to see Mr. Wingfold before I go?" asked Richard.

"Who's he?"

"The clergyman of the next parish, sir."

"I don't know him—don't want to know him:—What have you got to do with *him*?"

"He was kind to me when I was down here before."

"I don't care you should have much to do with the clergy."

"You said, sir, I might go into the church!"

"*That's* another thing quite! You would have the thing in your own hands then!"

Richard was silent. There was no point to argue.

The moment Sir Wilton was gone, Simon turned to his grandson.

"It was a pity you asked him about Mr. Wingfold. The only thing is, you mustn't let out his secret. As to seeing Mr. Wingfold, or Miss Wylder either, just do as you please."

"No, grandfather. If I had not asked him, perhaps I might; but to ask him, and then not do what he told me, would be a sneaking shame!"

"You're right, my boy! Hold on that way, and you'll never be ashamed—or make your people ashamed either."

For the meantime, then, Richard went to London with his mother; and so anxious was old Simon, stimulated in part by the faithfulness of his grandson, to do nothing that might thwart the pleasure of the tyrant, that when first Wingfold asked after Richard, he told him he was at home, and the next time that he was at work in the country.

Richard went on helping his uncle, and going often to see his brother and sister. When Arthur was able for the journey, both he and Alice went with him. At the station they were met by Simon, with an old post-chaise he had to mend up. Having seen Arthur comfortably settled, his brother and sister went back to London together—Alice to go into a single room, and betake herself once more to her work, but with new courage and hope; Richard to

the book-binding till his father should have found a tutor for him.

The Tukes were slowly becoming used, if not reconciled to his care of the Mansons. His mother, indignant for her deceased sister, stood out the stiffest; the bookbinder could not fail to see that the youth was but putting in practice the socialistic theories he had himself sought to teach him. True, the thing came straight from the heart of Richard, and went much farther than his uncle's theories; but his uncle counted it the result of his own training, and woke at last to the fact that his theories were better than he had himself known.

With the help of the head of the college to which Sir Wilton had resolved to send his son, a tutor was at length found—happily for Richard, one of the right sort. They went together to Oxford, and set to work at once. It would be hard to say which of the two reaped the more pleasure from the relation, or which, in the duplex process of teaching and learning, gained the most. For the tutor had in Richard a pupil of practiced brain yet fresh, a live soul ready, for its own need and nourishment, to use every truth it came near. His penetrative habit made not a few regard him as a bore: their feeble vitality was troubled by the energy of his; he could not let a thing go in which he descried a principle: he must see it close! To the more experienced he was one who had not yet learned, wisely fearful of the trampling hoof, to carry aside his oyster with its possible pearl before he opened it. In earnest about everything, he must work out his liberty before he could gambol. A slave will amuse himself in his dungeon; a free man must file through his chains and dig through his

prisón-walls before he can frolic. Sunlight and air came through his open windows enough to keep Richard alive and strong, but not enough yet to make him merry. He was too solemn, thus, for most of those he met, but, happily, not for his tutor. Finding Richard knew ten times as much of English literature as himself, he became in this department his pupil's pupil; and listening to his occasional utterance of a religious difficulty, had new regions of thought opened in him, to the deepening and verifying of his nature. The result for the tutor was that he sought ordination, in the hope of giving to others what had at length become real to himself.

Richard gained little distinction at his examinations. He did well enough, but was too eager after real knowledge to care about appearing to know.

He made friends, but not many familiar friends. He sorely missed ministration: it had grown a necessity of his nature. It was well that the habit should be broken for a time. For, laden with consciousness, and not full of God, the soul will delight in itself as a benefactor, a regnant giver, the centre of thanks and obligation: and will thus, with a rampart-mound of self-satisfaction, dam out the original creative life of its being, the recognition of which is life eternal. But it grew upon Richard that, if there be a God, it is the one business of a man to find him, and that, if he would find him, he must obey the voice of his conscience.

As to the outward show of the man, Richard's carriage was improving. Level intercourse with men of his own age, but more at home in what is called society, influenced his manners both with and without his will, while, all the time, he was gather-

ing the confidence of experience. His rowing, and the daily run to and from the boats, with other exercises prescribed by his tutor, strengthened the shoulders whose early stoop had threatened to return with much reading. He was fast growing more than presentable.

With the men of his year, his character more than his faculty had influence.

Old Simon was doing his best for Arthur. He would not hear of his going back to London, or attempting anything in the way of work beyond a little in the garden. He was indeed nowise fit for more.

The blacksmith himself was making progress—the best parts of him were growing fast. Age was turning the strength into channels and mill-streams, which before, wild-foaming, had flooded the meadows.

CHAPTER LIV.

BARBARA AT HOME.

BARBARA'S brother, her father's twin, was fast following her mother's to that somewhere each of us must learn for himself, no one can learn from another. While they were in London, he was in the Isle of Wight with his tutor. His mother and sister had several times gone to see him, but he did not show much pleasure in their attentions, and was certainly happier with his tutor than with any one else. Disease, however, was making straight the path of Love. Now they were all at home at Wylder Hall, and Death was on his way to join them. Love, however, was watching, ready to wrest from him his sting—without which he is no more Death, but Sleep. As the poor fellow grew weaker, his tutor became less able to console him; and he could not look to his mother for the tenderness he had seen her lavish on his brother. But the love of his sister had always leaned toward him, ready, on the least opening of the door of his heart, to show itself in the chink; and at last the opportunity of being to him and doing for him what she could, arrived. One day, on the lawn, he tripped and fell. The strong little Barbara took him in her arms, and carried him to his room. When two drops of water touch, the mere contact is not of long duration; the hearts of the sister and the dying brother rushed into each other. After this, they were

seldom apart. A new life had waked in the very heart of death, and grew and spread through the being of the boy. His eye became brighter, not with fever only, but with love and content and hope; for Barbara made him feel that nothing could part them; that they had been born into the world for the hour when they should find one another——as now they had found one another, to have one another to all eternity: it was an end of their being! He would come creeping up to her as she worked or read, and sit on a stool at her feet, asking for nothing, wishing for nothing, content to be near her. But then Barbara's book or work was soon banished. He was bigger than she, but the muscles of the little maiden were as springs of steel; informed with the tenderest, strongest heart in all the county, and presently he would find himself lifted to her lap, his head on her shoulder, the sweetest voice in all the world whispering loveliest secrets in his willing ear, and her face bent over him with the stoop of heaven over the patient, weary earth. In her arms his poor wasting body forgot its restlessness; the fever that irritated every nerve, burning away the dust of the world, seemed to pause and let him grow a little cool; and the sleep that sometimes came to him there was sweet as death. The face that had so long looked peevish wore now a waiting look; in heaven, every one sheltered the other, and the arms of God were round them all!

One day the mother peeped in, and saw them seated thus. Motherhood, strong in her, though hitherto, as regarded the boy, poisoned by her strife with her husband, moved and woke at the sight of her natural place occupied by her daughter.

"Let me take him, poor fellow!" she said.

Delighted that her mother should do something for him, Barbara rose with him in her arms. The mother sat down, and Barbara laid him in her lap. But the mother felt him lie listless and dead; no arm came creeping feebly up to encircle her neck. One of her babies died unborn, and she knew the moment: the strange sad feeling of the time came back to her now; she felt through all her sensitive maternal body that her child did not care for her. Grown, through her late illness, at once weaker and tenderer, she burst into silent weeping. He looked up; the convulsion of her pain had roused him from a half-sleep. A tear dropped on his face.

"Don't rain, mamma! I will be good!" he said, and held his mouth to be kissed.

He was much too old for such baby-speech, but as he grew weaker, he had grown younger; and it seemed now as if, in his utter helplessness, he would go back to the bosom of his mother. She clasped him to her, and from that moment she and Barbara shared him between them.

So for a while Barbara had not the same room to think about Richard; but when she did think of him, it was always in the same loving, trusting, hoping way.

When in London, she went to all the parties to which she was expected to go, and enjoyed them—after her own fashion. She loved her kind, and liked their company up to a point. But often would the crowd and the glitter, the motion and iridescence, vanish from her, and she sit there a live soul dreaming within closed doors. She would be pacing her weary pony through a pale land, under a globose

moon, homeward; or, on the back of one of her father's fleet horses, sweeping eastward over the grassy land, in the level light of the setting sun, watching the strange herald-shadow of herself and her horse rushing away before them, ever more distort as it fled:—like some ghastly monster, in horror at itself, it hurried to the infinite seeking blessed annihilation, and ever gathering speed as the sun of its being sank, till at last it gained the goal of its nirvana, not by its well run race, but in the darkness of its vanished creator. Then with a sigh would Barbara come to herself, the centre of many regards.

Arthur Lestrange found himself no nearer to her than before—farther off indeed; for here he was but one among many that sought her. But her behavior to him was the same in a crowded room in London as in the garden at Mortgrange. She spoke to him kindly, turned friendlily to him when he addressed her, and behaved so that the lying hint of Lady Ann, that they had been for some time engaged, was easily believed. A certain self-satisfied, well-dressed idiot said it was a pity a girl like that, a little Amazon, who, for as innocent as she looked, could ride backward and steer her steed straight, should marry a half-baked brick like Lestrange: Arthur, though he was not one of the worthiest, was worth ten of him, faultless as were his coats and neckties!

Her father had several times said to her that it was time she should marry, but had never got nearer anything definite; for there her eyes would flash, and her mouth close tight—compelling the reflection that her mother had been more than enough for him, and he had better not throw his daughter into the opposition as well. He could not, he saw clearly,

prevail with her against her liking; but it would be an infernal pity, he thought, seeing poor Marcus must go, if she would not have Lestrange; for the properties would marry splendidly, and then who could tell what better title might not stand on the top of the baronetcy!

Lady Ann would not let her hope go. She grew daily more fearful of the cloud that hung in the future: out of it might at any moment step the child of her enemy, the low born woman who had dared to be Lady Lestrange before her! Then where would she and her children be? That her Arthur would not succeed him, would be a morsel to sweeten her husband's death for him! It would be life in death to him to spite the woman he had married! At one crisis in their history, he had placed in her hands a will that left everything to her son; but he might have made ten wills after that one! She knew she had done nothing to please him: she had in fact never spent a thought on making life a good thing to the man she had married. She wished she had endeavored or might now endeavor to make herself agreeable to him. But it was too late! Sir Wilton would instantly imagine a rumor of the lost heir, and be on the alert for her discomfiture! If only he had not yet made a later will! He must die one day: why not in time to make his death of use when his life was of none! No one would wonder he had preferred the offspring of her noble person to the lost brat of the peasant woman!

How far over the line that separates guilt from greed, Lady Ann might not have gone had she been sure of not being found out, she herself could not have told. The look of things is very different at

night and in the morning; the bed-chamber can shelter what would be a horror in a court of justice; a conscience at peace in its own darkness will shudder in the gaslight of public opinion. It is marvellous that what we call *the public*, a mere imbecile as to judgment, should yet possess the Godlike power of awakening the individual conscience—and that with its own large dullness of conscience! Truly the relation of the world to its maker cannot primarily be an intellectual one; it must be a relation tremendously deeper! We do not, I mean, to speak after the manner of men, come of God's intellect, but of his imagination. He did not make us with his hands, but loved us out of his heart.

The same week in which Sir Wilton gave that will into his lady's keeping, he executed a second, in which he made the virtue of the former depend on the non-appearance of the lost heir. Of this will he said nothing to his wife. Even from the grave he would hold a shadowy yet not impotent rod over her and her family! Lady Ann suspected something of the sort, and spent every moment safe from his possible appearance, in searching for some such hidden torpedo. But there was one thing of which Sir Wilton took better care than of his honor—and that was his bunch of keys.

After the return of the Lestranges and the Wylders to their country-homes, Lady Ann, having prevailed on Mrs. Wylder to pay her a visit, initiated an attempt to gain her connivance in her project for the alliance of the houses. For this purpose she opened upon her with the same artillery she had employed against her husband. Mrs. Wylder sat for some time quietly listening, but looking so like her daughter, that Lady

Ann saw the mother's and not the father's was the alliance to seek. Thereupon she plucked the tompion out of the best gun in her battery, as she thought, and began to hint a fear that Miss Wylder had taken a fancy to a person unworthy of her.

"Girls who have not been much in society," she said, "are not unfrequently the sport of strange infatuations! I have myself known an earl's daughter marry a baker! I do not, of course, imagine *your* daughter guilty of the slightest impropriety,——"

Scarcely had the word left her lips, when a fury stood before her—towered above her, eyes flashing and mouth set, as if on the point of tearing her to pieces.

"Say the word and my Bab in the same breath again, and I'll throttle you, you vile woman!" cried Mrs. Wylder, and hung there like a thunder-cloud, lightening continuously.

Lady Ann was not of a breed familiar with fear, but, for the first time in her life, except in the presence of her mother, a far more formidable person than herself, she did feel afraid—of what, she would have found it hard to say, for to acknowledge the possibility of personal violence would be almost as undignified as to threaten it!

"I did not mean to offend you," she said, growing a little paler, but at the same time more rigid.

"What sort of mother do you take me for? Offended, indeed! Would you be all honey, I should like to know, if I had the assurance to say such a thing of one of your girls?"

"I spoke as to a mother who knew what girls are like!"

"You don't know what my girl Bab is like!" cried

Mrs. Wylder, with something that much resembled an imprecation: the word she used would shock thousands of mothers not comparable to her in motherhood. If propriety were righteousness, the kingdom of heaven would be already populous.

Lady Ann was offended, and seriously: was alliance with such a woman permissible or sufferable? But she was silent. For once in her life she did not know the proper thing to say. Was the woman mad, or only a savage?

Mrs. Wylder's eloquence required opposition. She turned away, and with a backward glance of blazing wrath, left the room and the house.

"Home; and be quick about it!" she said to the footman as he closed the door of the carriage—and she disappeared in a whirlwind.

From the library Sir Wilton saw her stormy exit and departure. "By Jove!" he said to himself, "that woman must be one of the right sort! She's what my Ruby might have been by this time if she'd been spared! A hundred to one, my lady was insolent to her!—said something cool about her madcap girl, probably! *She's* the right sort, by Jove, that little Bab! If only my Richard now, leathery fellow, would glue on to her! There's nothing left in this cursed world of the devil and all his angels that I should like half so well! I'll put him up to it, I will! Arthur and she indeed! As if a plate of porridge like Arthur would draw a fireflash like Bab! I'd give the whole litter of 'em, and throw in the dam, to call that plucky little robin my girl! I'd give my soul to have such a girl!"

It did not occur to him that his soul for Barbara would scarcely be fair barter.

"Dick's well enough," he went on, "but he's a man, and you've got to quarrel with him! I'm tired of quarrelling!"

The instant she reached home, Mrs. Wylder sent for her daughter, and demanded, fury still blazing in her eyes, what she had been doing to give that beast of a Lady Ann a right to talk.

"Tell me first how she talked, mamma," returned Barbara, used to her mother's ways, and nowise annoyed at being so addressed. "I can't have been doing anything very bad, for she's been doing what she can to get me and keep me."

"She has?—And you never told me!"

"I didn't think it worth telling you.—She's been setting papa on to me too!"

"Oh! I see! And you wouldn't set him and me on each other! Dutiful child! You reckoned you'd had enough of that! But I'll have no buying and selling of my goods behind my back! If you speak one more civil word to that young jackanapes Lestrange, you shall hear it again on both your ears!"

"I will not speak an uncivil word to him, mamma; he has never given me occasion; but I shan't break my heart if I never see him again. If you like, I won't once go near the place. Theodora's the only one I care about—and she's as dull as she is good!"

"What did the kangaroo mean by saying you were sweet on somebody not worthy of you?"

"I know what she meant, mother; but the man is worthy of a far better woman than me—and I hope he'll get her some day!"

Thereupon little Bab burst into tears, half of rage, half of dread lest her good wish for Richard should be granted otherwise than she meant it. For she did

not at the moment desire very keenly that he should get all he deserved, but thought she might herself just do, while she did hope to be a better woman before the day arrived.

"Come, come, child! None of that! I don't like it. I don't want to cry on the top of my rage. What is the man? Who is he? What does the woman know about him?"

At once Barbara began, and told her mother the whole story of Richard and herself. The mother listened. Old days and the memory of a lover, not high in the social scale, whom she had to give up to marry Mr. Wylder, came back upon her, and her heart went with her daughter's before she knew what it was about; her daughter's love and her own seemed to mingle in one dusky shine, as if the daughter had inherited the mother's experience. The heart of the mother would not have her child like herself gather but weed-flowers of sorrow among the roses in the garden of love. She had learned this much, that the things the world prizes are of little good to still the hearts of women. But when Barbara told her how Lady Ann would have it that this same Richard, the bookbinder, was a natural son of Sir Wilton, she started to her feet, crying:

"Then the natural bookbinder shall have her, and my lady's fool may go to the dogs! You shall have *my* money, Bab, anyhow."

"But, mammy dear," said Barbara, "what will papa say?"

"Poof!" returned her mother. "I've known him too long to care what he says!"

"I don't like offending him," returned Barbara.

"Don't mention him again, child, or I'll turn him

loose on your bookbinder. Am I to put my own ewe-lamb to the same torture I had to suffer by marrying him! God forbid! When you're happy with your husband, perhaps you'll think of me sometimes and say, 'My mother did it! She wasn't a good woman, but she loved her Bab!'"

A passionate embrace followed. Barbara left the room with a happy heart, and went—not to her own to brood on her love, but to her brother's, whose feeble voice she heard calling her. Upon him her gladness overflowed.

CHAPTER LV.

MISS BROWN.

THE same evening Barbara rode to the smithy, in the hope of hearing some news of Richard from his grandfather. The old man was busy at the anvil when he heard Miss Brown's hoofs on the road. He dropped his hammer, flung the tongs on the forge, and leaving the iron to cool on the anvil, went to meet her.

"How do you do, grandfather?" said Barbara, with unconscious use of the appellation.

Simon was well pleased to be called grandfather, but too politic and too well bred to show his pleasure.

"As well as hard work can help me to. How are you yourself, my pretty?" returned Simon.

"As well as nothing to do—except nursing poor Mark—will let me," she answered. "Please can you tell me anything about Richard yet?"

"Can you keep a secret, honey?" rejoined Simon. "I ain't sure as I'm keeping strict within the law, but if I didn't think you fit, I shouldn't say a word."

"Don't tell me, if it be anything I ought to tell if I knew it."

"If you can show me you ought to tell any one, I will release you from your promise. But perhaps you feel you ought to tell everything to your mother?"

"No, not other people's secrets. But I think I

won't have it. I don't like secrets. I'm frightened at them."

"Then I'll tell you at my own risk, for you're the right sort to trust, promise or no promise. I only hope you will not tell without letting me know first; because then I might have to do something else by way of—what do they call it when you take poison, and then take something to keep it from hurting you? —Richard's gone to college!"

Bab slid from Miss Brown's back, flung her arms, with the bridle on one of them, round the blacksmith's neck, and, heedless of Miss Brown's fright, jumped up, and kissed the old man for the good news.

"Miss! miss! your clean face!" cried the blacksmith.

"Oh, Richard! Richard! you *will* be happy now!" she said, her voice trembling with buried tears. "—But will he ever shoe Miss Brown again, grandfather?"

"Many's the time, I trust!" answered Simon. "He'll be proud to do it. If not, he never was worth a smile from your sweet mouth."

"He'll be a great man some day!" she laughed, with a little quiver of the sweet mouth.

"He's a good man now, and I don't care," answered the smith. "As long as son of mine can look every man in the face, I don't care whether it be great or small he is."

"But, please, Mr. Armour," said Bab, timidly, "wouldn't it be better still if he could look God in the face?"

"You're right there, my pretty dove!" replied the old man; "only a body can't say everything out in a breath!—But you're right, you *are* right!" he went

on. "I remember well the time when I thought I had nothing to be ashamed of; but the time came when I was ashamed of many things, and I'd done nothing worse in the meantime either! When a man first gets a peep inside himself, he sees things he didn't look to see—and they stagger him a bit! Some horses have their hoofs so shrunk and cockled they take the queerest shoes to set them straight; an' them shoes is the troubles o' this life, I take it.—Now mind, I ain't told you what college he's gone to—nor whether it be at Oxford or at Cambridge, or away in Scotland or Germany—and you don't know! And if you don't feel bound to mention the name of the place, I'd be obliged to you not to. But I will let him know that I've told you what sort of a place he's at, because he couldn't tell you himself, being he's bound to hold his tongue."

Barbara went home happy: his grandfather recognized the bond between them! As to Richard, she had no fear of his forgetting her.

With more energy still, she went about her duties; and they seemed to grow as she did them. As the end of Mark's sickness approached, he became more and more dependent upon her, and only his mother could take her place with him. He loved his father dearly, but his father never staid more than a moment or two in the sick-chamber. Mark at length went away to find his twin; and his mother and Barbara wept, but not all in sorrow.

One morning, the week after Mark's death, Mr. Wylder desired Barbara to go with him to his study —where indeed about as much study went on as in a squirrel's nest—and there, after solemn prologue as to its having been right and natural while she was

but a girl with a brother that she should be allowed a great deal of freedom, stated that now, circumstances being changed, such freedom could no longer be given her: she was now sole heiress, and must do as an heir would have had to do; namely, consult the interests of the family. In those interests, he continued, it was necessary he should strengthen as much as possible his influence in the county; it was time also that, for her own sake, she should marry; and better husband or fitter son-in-law than Mr. Lestrange could not be desired: he was both well-behaved and good-looking, and when Mortgrange was one with Wylder, would have by far the finest estate in the county!

Filial obligation is a point upon which those parents lay the heaviest stress who have done the least to develop the relation between them and their children. The first duty is from the parent to the child: this unfulfilled, the duty of the child remains untaught.

"I am sorry to go against you, papa," said Barbara, "but I cannot marry Mr. Lestrange!"

"Stuff and nonsense! Why not?"

"Because I do not love him."

"Fiddlesticks! I did not love your mother when I married her!—You don't dislike him, I know!—Now don't tell me you do, for I shall not believe you!"

"He is always very kind to me, and I am sorry he should want what is not mine to give him."

"Not yours to give him! What do you mean by that? If it is not yours, it is mine! Have you not learned yet, that when I make up my mind to a

thing, that thing is done? And where I have a right, I am not one to waive it!"

Where husband and wife are not one, it is impossible for the daughter to be one with both, or perhaps with either; and the constant and foolish bickering to which Barbara had been a witness throughout her childhood had tended rather to poison than nourish respect. Whether Barbara failed to yield as much as Mr. Wylder had a right to claim, I leave to the judgment of my reader, reserving my own, and remarking only that, if his judgment be founded on principles differing from mine, our judgments cannot agree. The idea of parent must be venerated, and may cast a glow upon the actual parent, himself nowise venerable, so that the heart of a daughter may ache with the longing to see her father such that she could love and worship him as she would; but when it comes to life and action, the will of such a parent, if it diverge from what seems to the child true and right, ought to weigh nothing. A parent is not a maker, is not God. We must leave father and mother and all for God, that is, for what is right, which is his very will—only let us be sure it is for God, and not for self. If the parent has been the parent of good thoughts and right judgments in the child, those good thoughts and right judgments will be on the parent's side; if he has been the parent of evil thoughts and false judgments, they may be for him or against him, but in the end they will work solely for division. Any general decay of filial manners must originate with the parents.

"I am not a child, I am a woman," said Barbara; "and I owe it to him who made me a woman to take care of her."

"Mind what you say. I have rights, and will enforce them."

"Over my person?" returned Barbara, her eyes sending out a flash that reminded him of her mother, and made him the angrier.

"If you do not consent here and now," he said, sternly, "to marry Mr. Lestrange—that is, if, after your mother's insolence to Lady Ann,——"

"My mother's insolence to Lady Ann!" exclaimed Barbara, drawing herself, in her indignation, to the height of her small person; but her father would rush to his own discomfiture.

"—if, as I say," he went on, "he should now condescend to ask you—I swear——"

"You had better not swear, papa!"

"—I swear you shall not have a foot of my land."

"Oh! that is all? There you are in your right, and I have nothing to say."

"You insolent hussy! You won't like it when you find it done!"

"It will be the same as if Mark had lived."

"It's that cursed money of your mother's makes you impudent!"

"If you could leave me moneyless, papa, it would make no difference. A woman that can shoe her own horse,——"

"Shoe her own horse!" cried her father.

"Yes, papa!—You couldn't!—And I *made* two of her shoes the last time! Wouldn't any woman that can do that, wouldn't she—to save herself from shame and disgust—to be queen over herself—wouldn't she take a place as house-maid or shop-girl rather than marry the man she didn't love?"

Mr. Wylder saw he had gone too far.

"You know more than is good!" he said. "But don't you mistake: your mother's money is settled on you, but your father is your trustee!"

"My father is a gentleman!" rejoined Barbara—not so near the truth as she believed.

"Take you care how you push a gentleman," rejoined her father.

"Not to love is not to marry—not if the man was a prince!" persisted Barbara.

She went to her mother's room, but said nothing of what had passed. She would not heat those ovens of wrath, the bosoms of her parents.

The next morning she ran to saddle Miss Brown. To her astonishment, her friend was not in her box, nor in any stall in the stable; neither was any one visible of whom to ask what had become of her: for the first time in her life, everybody had got out of Barbara's way. In the harness-room, however, she came upon one of the stable-boys. He was in tears. When he saw her, he started and turned to run, looking as if he had had a piece of Miss Brown for breakfast, but she stopped him.

"Where is Miss Brown?" she said.

"Don' know, miss."

"Who knows then?"

"P'r'aps master, miss."

"What are you crying for?"

"Don' know, miss."

"That's not true. Boys don't cry without knowing why!"

"Well, miss, I ain't *sure* what I'm cryin' for."

"Speak out, man! Don't be foolish."

"Master give me a terrible cut, miss!"

"Did you deserve it?"

"Don' know, miss."

"You don't seem to know anything this morning!"

"No, miss!"

"What did your master give you the cut for?"

"'Cause I was cryin'."

Here he burst into a restrained howl.

"What were you crying for?"

"Because Miss Brown was gone."

"And you cried without knowing where she was gone?" said Barbara, turning almost sick with apprehension.

"Yes, miss," affirmed the miserable boy.

"Is she dead?"

"No, miss, she ain't dead; she's sold!"

The words were not yet out of his mouth when he turned and bolted.

"That's my gentleman-papa!" said Barbara to herself before she could help it. Had she been any girl but Barbara, she would have cried like the boy.

Not once from that moment did she allude to Miss Brown in the hearing of father or servant.

One day her mother asked her why she never rode, and she told her. The wrath of the mother was like that of a tigress. She sprang to her feet, and bounded to the door. But when she reached it, Barbara was between her and the handle.

"Mother! mother dear!" she pleaded.

The mother took her by the shoulders, and thought to fling her across the room. But she was not so strong as she had been, and she found the little one hard as nails: she could not move her an inch.

"Get out of my way!" she cried. "I want to kill him!"

"Mammy dear, listen! It's a month ago! I said nothing—for love-sake!"

"Love-sake! I think I hear you! Dare to tell me you love that wretch of a father of yours! I will kill *you* if you say you love him!"

Barbara threw her arms round her mother's neck, and said:

"Listen, mammy: I do love him a little bit; but it wasn't for love of him I held my tongue."

"Bah! Your bookbinder-fellow! What has he to do with it?"

"Nothing at all. It wasn't for him either. It was for God's sake I held my peace, mammy. If *all* his children quarrelled like you and dad, what a house he would have! It was for God's sake I said nothing; and you know, mammy, you've made it up with God, and you mustn't go and be naughty again!"

The mother stood silent and still. It seemed for an instant as if the old fever had come back, for she shivered. She turned and went to her chair, sat down, and again was still. A minute after, her forehead flushed like a flame, turned white, then flushed and paled again several times. Then she gave a great sigh, and the conflict was over. She smiled, and from that moment she also never said a word about Miss Brown.

But in the silence of her thought, Barbara suffered, for what might not be the fate of Miss Brown! No one but a genuine lover of animals could believe how she suffered. In her mind's eye she kept seeing her turn her head with sharp-curved neck in her stall, or shoot it over the door of her box, looking and longing for her mistress, and wondering why she did not come to pat her, or feed her, or saddle her for the

joyous gallop across grass and green hedge; and the heart of her mistress was sore for her. But at length one day in church, they read the psalm in which come the words, "Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast!" and they went to her soul. She reflected that if Miss Brown was in trouble, it might be for the saving of Miss Brown: she had herself got enough good from trouble to hope for that! For she heartily believed the animals partakers in the redemption of Jesus Christ; and she fancied perhaps they knew more about it than we think,—the poor things are so silent! Anyhow she saw that the reasonable thing was to let God look after his own; and if Miss Brown was not his, how could she *be*?

But the mother was sending all over the country to find who had Miss Brown; and she had not inquired long, before she learned that she was in the stables at Mortgrange. There she knew she would be well treated, and therefore told Barbara the result of her inquiries.

CHAPTER LVI.

WINGFOLD AND BARBARA.

BARBARA went yet oftener to Mr. and Mrs. Wingfold. By this time, through Simon Armour, they knew something about Richard, but none of them all felt at liberty to talk about him.

Barbara had now a better guide in her reading than Richard. True reader as he had been, Wingfold's acquaintance both with literature and its history, that is, its relation to the development of the people, was as much beyond the younger man's as it ought to be. What in Barbara Richard had begun well, Wingfold was carrying on better.

With his help she was now studying, to no little advantage, more than one subject connected with the main interest common to her and Richard; and she thought constantly of what Richard would say, and how she would answer him. Hence, naturally, she had the more questions to put to her tutor. Now Wingfold had passed through all Richard's phases, and through some that were only now beginning to show in him; therefore he was well prepared to help her—although there was this difference between the early moral conditions of the two men, that Wingfold had been prejudiced in favor of much that he found it impossible to hold, whereas Richard had been prejudiced against much that ought to be cast away.

Richard suffered not a little at times from his

enforced silence: what might not happen because he must not speak? But hearing nothing discouraging from his grandfather, he comforted himself in hope. He knew that in him he had a strong ally, and that Barbara loved the hot-hearted blacksmith, recognizing in him a more genuine breeding, as well as a far greater capacity, than in either Sir Wilton or her father. He toiled on, doing his duty, and receiving in himself the reward of the same, with further reward ever at the door. For there is no juster law than the word, "To him that hath shall be given."

"Why do I never see you on Miss Brown?" asked Wingfold one day of Barbara.

"For a reason I think I ought not to tell you."

"Then don't tell me," returned the parson.

But by a mixture of instinctive induction and involuntary intuition, he saw into the piece of domestic tyranny, and did what he could to make up for it, by taking her every now and then a long walk or drive with his wife and their little boy. He gave her strong, hopeful things to read—and in the search after such was driven to remark how little of the hopeful there is in the English, or in any other language. The song of hope is indeed written in men's hearts, but few sing it. Yet it is of all songs the sorest-needed of struggling men.

Heart and brain, Wingfold was full of both humor and pathos. In their walks and drives, many a serious subject would give occasion to the former, and many a merry one to the latter. Sometimes he would take a nursery-rhyme for his theme, and expatiate upon it so, that at one instant Barbara would burst into the gayest laughter, and the next have to restrain her tears. Rarely would Wingfold enter a

sick chamber, especially that of a cottage, with a long face and a sermon in his soul; almost always he walked lightly in, with a cheerful look, and not seldom an odd story on his tongue, well pleased when he could make the sufferer laugh—better pleased sometimes when he had made him sorry. He did not find those that laughed the readiest the hardest to make sorry. He moved his people by infecting their hearts with the feeling in his own.

Having now for many years cared only for the will of God, he was full of joy. For the will of the Father is the root of all his children's gladness, of all their laughter and merriment. The child that loves the will of the Father is at the heart of things; his will is *with* the motion of the eternal wheels; the eyes of all those wheels are opened upon him, and he knows whence he came. Happy and fearless and hopeful, he knows himself the child of him from whom he came, and his peace and joy break out in light. He rises and shines. Bliss creative and energic there is none other, on earth or in heaven, than the will of the Father.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE BARONET'S WILL.

ARTHUR LESTRANGE was sharply troubled when he found he was to see no more of Barbara. He went again and again to Wylder Hall, but neither mother nor daughter would receive him. When he learned that Miss Brown was for sale, he bought her for love of her mistress. All the explanation he could get from Lady Ann was, that the young woman's mother was impossible; she was more than half a savage.

Time's wheels went slow thereafter at Mortgrange. Sir Wilton missed his first-born. Whatever annoyed him in his wife or any of her children fed the desire for Richard. Arthur did not please him. He had no way distinguished himself—and some men are annoyed when their sons prove only a little better than themselves. Percy was a poisoned thorn in his side: he was even worse than his father. All his thoughts took refuge in Richard.

He had become dissatisfied with his agent, and although he had never taken an interest in business, distrust made him now look into things a little. He called his lawyer from London, and had him make a thorough investigation. Dismissing thereupon his agent, he would have Arthur take charge of the estate; but the young man, with an inborn dislike to figures, flatly refused, saying he preferred the army. Sir Wilton did not like the army: he had been in it himself, and had left it in a hurry—no one ever knew why.

The only comfort in the house occupied the soul of Lady Ann: it was that she heard nothing of the bookbinder fellow! She had grown so torpid, that while Danger was not flattening his nose against the window-pane, she was at peace. For the rest, a lawyer of her own had the will in his keeping, and she had come upon no trace of another.

But when Sir Wilton sent for his lawyer to look into his factor's accounts, he had a further use for him, of which his wife heard nothing: he made him draw up another will, in which he left everything to Richard, only son of his first wife, Robina Armour. With every precaution for secrecy, the will was signed and witnessed, but when the lawyer would have carried it with him, the baronet declined to give it up. He laid it aside for a week, then had the horses put to, and drove to find Mr. Wingfold, of whom he had heard from Richard. When he saw him, man of the world as he was, he was impressed by the simplicity of a clergyman without a touch of the clerical, without any look of what he called *sanctity*—the look that comes upon a man cherishing the notion that he is intrusted with things more sacred than God will put in the hands of his other children. Such men, and they are many, one would like to lay for a time in the sheet of Peter's vision, among the four-footed animals and creeping things, to learn that, as there is nothing common or unclean, so is there no class more sacred than another. Never will it be right with men, until every commonest meal is a glad recognition of the living Saviour who gives himself, always and perfectly, to his brothers and sisters.

The baronet begged a private interview, and told

the parson he wanted to place in his keeping a certain paper, with the understanding that he would not open it for a year after his death, and would then act upon the directions contained in it.

"Provided always," Wingfold stipulated, "that they require of me nothing unfit, impossible or wrong."

"I pledge myself they require nothing unworthy of the cloth," said Sir Wilton.

"The cloth be hanged!" said Wingfold. "Do they require anything unworthy of a man—or if you think the word means more—of a gentleman?"

"They do not," answered the baronet.

"Then you must write another paper, stating that you have asked me to undertake this, but that you have given me no hint of the contents of the accompanying document. This second you must enclose with the first, sealing the envelope with your own seal."

Sir Wilton at once consented, and there and then did as Wingfold desired.

"I've checkmated my lady at last!" he chuckled, as he drove home. "She would have me the villain to disinherit my first-born for her miserable brood! She shall find my other will, and think she's safe! Then the thunderbolt—and Dick master! My lady's dower won't be much for Percy the cad and Arthur the proper, not to mention Dorothy the cow and Vixen the rat!"

He always spoke as if Lady Ann's children were none of his. Her ladyship had taught him to do so, for she always said, "*My* children!"

That night he slept with an easier mind. He had put the deed off and off, regarding it as his abdica-

tion ; but now it was done he felt more comfortable.

Wingfold suspected in the paper some provision for Richard, but could imagine no reason for letting it lie unopened until a year should have passed from the baronet's death. Troubling himself nothing, however, about what was not his business, he put the paper carefully aside—but where he must see it now and then, lest it should pass from his mind, and, with Sir Wilton's permission, told his wife what he had undertaken concerning it, that she might carry it out if he were prevented from doing so.

Time went on. Communication grew yet less between Mr. Wylder and his family. He had returned to certain old habits, and was spending money pretty fast in London. Failing to make himself a god in the house, he forsook it, and was rapidly losing this world's chance of appreciating a woman whose faults were to his as new wine to dirty water.

In the fourth year, Richard wrote to his father, through his grandfather of course, informing him he had got his B. A. degree, and was waiting further orders. The baronet was heartily pleased with the style of his letter, and in the privacy of his own room gave way to his delight at the thought of his wife's approaching consternation and chagrin. At the same time, however, he was not a little uneasy in prospect of the denouement. For the eyes of his wife had become almost a terror to him. Their gray ice, which had not grown clearer as it grew older, made him shiver. Why should the stronger so often be afraid of the weaker? Sometimes, I suppose, because conscience happens to side with the weaker ; sometimes only because the weaker is yet able to make the stronger, especially if he be lazy and a

lover of what he calls peace, worse than uncomfortable. The baronet dared not present his son to his wife except in the presence of at least one stranger.

He wrote to Richard, appointing a day for his appearance at Mortgrange.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE HEIR.

It was a lovely morning when Richard, his heart beating with a hope whose intensity of bliss he had never imagined, stopped at the station nearest to Mortgrange, and set out to walk there in the afternoon sun. June folded him in her loveliness of warmth and color. The grass was washed with transparent gold: he saw both the gold and the green together, but unmingled. Often had he walked the same road, a contented tradesman; a gentleman now, with a baronet to his father, he loved, and knew he must always love the tradesman-uncle more than the baronet-father. He was much more than grateful to his father for his ready reception of him, and his care of his education; but he could not be proud of him as of his mother and his aunt and uncle and his grandfather. He held it one of God's greatest gifts to come of decent people; and if in his case the decency was on one side only, it was the more his part to stop the current of transmitted evil, and in his own person do what he might to annihilate it!

His only anxiety was lest his father should again lay upon him the command to cease communication with his brother and sister. He lifted up his heart to God, and vowed that not for anything the earth could give would he obey. The socialism he had learned from his uncle had undergone a baptism to something infinitely higher. He prayed God to keep

him clean of heart, and able to hold by his duty. He promised God—it was a way he had when he would bind himself to do right—that he would not forsake his own, would not break the ties of blood for any law, custom, prejudice, or pride of man. The vow made his heart strong and light. But he felt there was little merit in the act, seeing he could live without his father's favor. He saw how much harder it would be for a poor tradeless man like Arthur Lestrange to make such a resolve. In the face of such a threat from his father what could he do?—where find courage to resist? Resist he must or be a slave, but hard indeed it would be! Every father, thought Richard, who loved his children, ought to make them independent of himself, that neither clog, nor net, nor hindrance of any kind might hamper the true working of their consciences: then would the service they rendered their parents be precious indeed! then indeed would love be lord, and neither self, nor the fear of man, nor the fear of fate be a law in their life!

He had not sent word to his grandfather that he was coming, and had told his father that he would walk from the station—which suited Sir Wilton, for he felt nervous, and was anxious there should be no stir. So Richard came to Mortgrange as quietly as a star to its place.

When he reached the gate and walked in as of old, he was challenged by the woman who kept it: of all the servants she and Lady Ann's maid had alone treated him with rudeness, and now she was not polite although she did not know him. Neither was he recognized by the man who opened the door.

Sir Wilton sat in the library expecting him. A

gentleman was with him, but he kept in the background, seemingly absorbed in the titles of a row of books.

"There you are, you rascal!" his father was on the point of saying as Richard came into the light of the one big bow-window, but, instead, he gazed at him for an instant in silence. Before him was one of the handsomest fellows his eyes had ever rested upon—broad-shouldered and tall and straight, with a thoughtful yet keen face, of which every feature was both fine and solid, and dark brown hair with night and firelight in it, and a touch of the sun here and there at moments. The situation might have been embarrassing to a more experienced man than Richard as he waited for his father to speak; but he stood quite at his ease, slightly bent, and motionless, neither hands nor feet giving him any of the trouble so often caused by those outlying provinces. The slight color that rose in his rather thin cheeks, only softened the beauty of a face whose outline was severe. He stood like a soldier waiting the word of his officer.

"By Jove!" said his father; and there was another pause.

The baronet was momently growing prouder of his son. He had never had a feeling like it before, He saw his mother in him.

"She's looking at me straight out of his eyes!" he said to himself.

"Ain't you going to sit down?" he said to him at last, forgetting that he had neither shaken hands with him, nor spoken a word of welcome.

Richard moved a chair a little nearer and sat down, wondering what would come next.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked his father.

"I must first know your wish, sir," he answered.

"Church won't do?"

"No, sir."

"Glad to hear it! You're much too good for the church!—No offence, Mr. Wingfold! The same applies to yourself."

"So my uncle on the stock-exchange used to say!" answered Wingfold, laughing, as he turned to the baronet. "He thought me good enough, I suppose, for a priest of Mammon!"

"I'm glad you're not offended. What do you think of that son of mine?"

"I have long thought well of him."

At the first sound of his voice, Richard had risen, and now approached him, his hand outstretched.

"Mr. Wingfold!" he said, joyfully.

"I remember now!" returned Sir Wilton; "it was from him I heard of you; and that was what made me seek your acquaintance.—He promises fairly, don't you think?—Shoulders good; head well set on!"

"He looks a powerful man!" said Wingfold. "—We shall be happy to see you, Mr. Lestrange, as soon as you care to come to us."

"That will be to-morrow, I hope, sir," answered Richard.

"Stop, stop!" cried Sir Wilton. "We know nothing for certain yet!—By-the-bye, if your stepmother don't make you particularly welcome, you needn't be surprised, my boy!"

"Certainly not. I could hardly expect her to be pleased, sir!"

"Not pleased? Not pleased at what? Now, now, don't you presume! Don't you take things for granted!

How do you know she will have reason to be displeased? I never promised you anything! I never told you what I intended!—Did I ever now?"

"No, sir. You have already done far more than ever you promised. You have given me all any man has a right to from his father. I am ready to go to London at once, and make my own living."

"How?"

"I don't know yet; I should have to choose—thanks to you and my uncle!"

"In the meantime, you must be introduced to your stepmother."

"Then—excuse me, Sir Wilton—" interposed the parson, "do you wish me to regard my old friend Richard as your son and heir?"

"As my son, yes; as my heir—that will depend——"

"On his behavior, I presume!" Wingfold ventured.

"I say nothing of the sort!" replied the baronet, testily. "Would you have me doubt whether he will carry himself like a gentleman? The thing depends on my pleasure. There are others besides him."

He rose to ring the bell. Richard started up to forestall his intent.

"Now, Richard," said his father, turning sharp upon him, "don't be officious. Nothing shows want of breeding more than to do a thing for a man in his own house. It is a cursed liberty!"

"I will try to remember, sir," answered Richard.

"Do; we shall get on the better."

He was seized, as by the claw of a crab, with a sharp twinge of the gout. He caught at the back of a chair, hobbled with its help to the table, and so to his seat. Richard restrained himself and stood rigid.

The baronet turned a half humorous, half reproachful look on him.

"That's right!" he said. "Never be officious. I wish my father had taught me as I am teaching you!—Ever had the gout, Mr. Wingfold?"

"Never, Sir Wilton."

"Then you ought every Sunday to say, 'Thank God that I have no gout!'"

"But if we thanked God for all the ills we don't have, there would be no time to thank him for any of the blessings we do have!"

"What blessings?"

"So many, I don't know where to begin to answer you."

"Ah, yes! you're a clergyman! I forgot. It's your business to thank God. For my part, being a layman, I don't know anything in particular I've got to thank him for."

"If I thought a layman had less to thank God for than a clergyman, I should begin to doubt whether either had anything to thank him for. Why, Sir Wilton, I find everything a blessing! I thank God I am a poor man. I thank him for every good book I fall in with. I thank him when a child smiles to me. I thank him when the sun rises or the wind blows on me. Every day I am so happy, or at least so peaceful, or at the worst so hopeful, that my very consciousness is a thanksgiving."

"Do you thank him for your wife, Mr. Wingfold?"

"Every day of my existence."

The baronet stared at him a moment, then turned to his son.

"Richard," he said, "you had better make up your mind to go into the church! You hear Mr.

Wingfold! I shouldn't like it myself; I should have to be at my prayers all day!"

"Ah, Sir Wilton, it doesn't take time to thank God! It only takes eternity."

Sir Wilton stared. He did not understand.

"Ring the bell, will you?" he said. "The fellow seems to have gone to sleep."

Richard obeyed, and not a word was spoken until the man appeared.

"Wilkins," said his master, "go to my lady, and say I beg the favor of her presence in the library for a moment."

The man went.

"No antipathy to cats, I hope!" he added, turning to Richard.

"None, sir," answered Richard, gravely.

"That's good! Then you won't be taken aback!"

In a few minutes—she seldom made her husband wait—Lady Ann sailed into the room, the servant closing the door so deftly behind her, that it seemed without moving to have given passage to an angelic presence.

The two younger men rose.

"Mr. Wingfold you know, my lady!" said her husband.

"I have not the pleasure," answered Lady Ann, with a slight motion of the hard bud at the top of her long stalk.

"Ah, I thought you did!—The Reverend Mr. Wingfold, Lady Ann!—My wife, Mr. Wingfold!—The other gentleman, Lady Ann,——"

He paused. Lady Ann turned her eyes slowly on Richard. Wingfold saw a slight just perceptible start, and a settling of the jaws.

"The other gentleman," resumed the baronet, "you do not know, but you will soon be the best of friends."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Wilton, I do know him!—I hope," she went on, turning to Richard, "you will keep steadily to your work. The sooner the books are finished the better!"

Richard smiled, but what he was on the point of saying, his father prevented.

"You mistake, my lady! I thought you did not know him!" said the baronet. "That gentleman is my son, and will one day be Sir Richard."

"Oh!" returned her ladyship—without a shadow of change in her impassivity, except Wingfold was right in fancying the slightest movement of squint in the eye next him. She held out her hand.

"This is an unexpected—"

For once in her life her lips were truer than her heart; they did not say *pleasure*.

Richard took her hand respectfully, sad for the woman whose winter had no fuel, and who looked as if she would be cold to all eternity. Lady Ann stared him in the eyes and said,—

"My favorite prayer-book has come to pieces at last: perhaps you would bind it for me?"

"I shall be delighted," answered Richard.

"Thank you," she said, bowed to Wingfold, and left the room.

Sir Wilton sat like an offended turkey-cock, staring after her. "By Jove!" he seemed to say to himself.

"There! that's over!" he cried, coming to himself. "Ring the bell, Richard, and let us have lunch.—Richard, *no* gentleman could have behaved better!

I am proud of you!—It's blood that does it!" he murmured to himself.

As if he had himself compounded both his own blood and his boy's in the still-room of creation, he took all the credit of Richard's *savoir faire*, as he counted it. He did not know that the same thing made Wingfold happy and Richard a gentleman! Richard had had a higher breeding than was known to Sir Wilton. At the court of courts, whence the manners of some other courts would be swept as dust from the floors, the baronet would hardly gain admittance!

Lady Ann went up the stair slowly and perpendicularly, a dull pain at her heart. The cause was not so much that her son was the second son, as that the son of the blacksmith's daughter was—she took care to say *at first sight*—a finer *gentleman* than her Arthur. Rank and position, she vaguely reflected, must not look for justice from the jealous heavens! They always sided with the poor! Just see the party-spirit of the Psalms! The rich and noble were hardly dealt with! Nowadays even the church was with the radicals!

The baronet was merry over his luncheon. The servants wondered at first, but before the soup was removed they wondered no more: the young man at the table, in whom not one of them had recognized the bookbinder, was the lost heir to Mortgrange! He was worth finding, they agreed—one who would hold his own! The house would be merrier now—thank heaven! They liked Mr. Arthur well enough, but here was his master!

The meal was over, and the baronet always slept after lunch.

"You'll stay to dinner, won't you, Mr. Wingfold?" he said, rising. "—Richard, ring the bell. Better send for Mrs. Locke at once, and arrange with her where you will sleep."

"Then I may choose my own room, sir?" rejoined Richard.

"Of course—but better not too near my lady's," answered his father with a grim smile as he hobbled from the room.

When the housekeeper came—

"Mrs. Locke," said Richard, "I want to see the room that used to be the nursery—in the older time, I mean."

"Yes, sir," answered Mrs. Locke, pleasantly, and led them up two flights of stairs and along corridor and passage to the room Richard had before occupied. He glanced round it, and said,

"This shall be my room. Will you kindly get it ready for me?"

She hesitated. It had certainly not been repapered, as Sir Wilton thought, and had said to Mrs. Tuke! To Mrs. Locke it seemed uninhabitable by a gentleman.

"I will send for the painter and paper-hanger at once," she replied, "but it will take more than a week to get ready."

"Pray leave it as it is," he answered. "—You can have the floor swept of course," he added with a smile, seeing her look of dismay. "I will sleep here to-night, and we can settle afterward what is to be done to it.—There used to be a portrait," he went on, "—over the chimney-piece, the portrait of a lady—not well painted, I fancy, but I liked it: what has become of it?"

Then first it began to dawn on Mrs. Locke that the young man who mended the books, and the heir to Mortgrange were the same person.

"It fell down one day, and has not been put up again," she answered.

"Do you know where it is?"

"I will find it, sir."

"Do, if you please. Whose portrait is it?"

"The last Lady Lestrange's, sir.—But bless my stupid old head! it's his own mother's picture he's asking for! You'll pardon me, sir! The thing's more bewildering than you'd think!—I'll go and get it at once."

"Thank you. Mr. Wingfold and I will wait till you bring it."

"There ain't anywhere for you to sit, sir!" lamented the old lady. "If I'd only known! I'm sure, sir, I wish you joy!"

"Thank you, Mrs. Locke. We'll sit here on the mattress."

Richard had not forgotten how the eyes of the picture used to draw his, and he had often since wondered whether it could be the portrait of his mother.

In a few minutes Mrs. Locke reappeared, carrying the portrait, which had never been put in a frame, and knotting the cord, Richard hung it again on the old nail. It showed a well-formed face, but was very flat and wooden. The eyes, however, were comparatively well painted; and it seemed to Richard that he could read both sorrow and disappointment in them, with a yearning after something she could not have.

They went out for a ramble in the park, and there

Richard told his friend as much as he knew of his story, describing as well as he understood them the changes that had passed upon him in the matter of religion, and making no secret of what he owed to the expostulations and spiritual resistances of Barbara. Wingfold, after listening with profound attention, told him he had passed through an experience in many points like, and at the root the same as his own ; adding that, long before he was sure of anything, it had become more than possible for him to keep going on : and that still he was but looking and hoping and waiting for a fuller dawn of what had made his being already blessed.

They consulted whether Wingfold should act on the baronet's careless invitation, and concluded it better he should not stay to dinner. Then, as there was yet time, and it was partly on Wingfold's way, they set out for the smithy.

CHAPTER LIX.

WINGFOLD AND ARTHUR MANSON.

When the first delight of their meeting was abated, Simon sent to let Arthur Manson know that his brother was there. For Arthur had all this time been with Simon, to whom Richard, saving enough from his allowance, had prevented him from being a burden.

He looked much better, and was enchanted to see his brother again, and learn the good news of his recognition by his father.

"I'm so glad it's you and not me, Richard!" he said. "It makes me feel quite safe and happy. We shall have nothing now but fair play all round, the rest of our lives! How happy Alice will be!"

"Is Alice still in the old place? I haven't heard of her for some time," said Richard.

"Don't you know?" exclaimed Arthur. "She's been at the parsonage for months and months! Mrs. Wingfold went and fetched her away, to work for her, and be near me. She's as happy now as the day is long. She says if everybody was as good as her master and mistress, there would be no misery left in the world."

"I don't doubt it," answered Richard. "—But I've just parted with Mr. Wingfold, and he didn't say a word about her!"

"When anything has to be done, Mr. Wingfold

never forgets it," said Arthur; "but I should just like to hear all the things Mr. Wingfold did and forgot in a month!"

"Arthur's getting on!" thought Richard.

But he had to learn how much Wingfold had done for him. First of all he had set himself, by talking to him and lending him books, to find out his bent, or at least something he was capable of. But for months he could not wake him enough to know anything of what was in him: the poor fellow was weary almost to death. At last, however, he got him to observe a little. Then he began to set him certain tasks; and as he was an invalid, the first was what he called "The task of twelve o'clock;" —which was, for a quarter of an hour from every noon during a month, to write down what he then saw going on in the world.

The first day he had nothing to show: he had seen nothing!

"What were the clouds doing?" Mr. Wingfold asked. "What were the horses in the fields doing? —What were the birds you saw doing?—What were the ducks and hens doing?—Put down whatever you see any creature about."

The next evening, he went to him again, and asked him for his paper. Arthur handed him a folded sheet.

"Now," said Mr. Wingfold, "I am not going to look at this for the present. I am going to lay it in one of my drawers, and you must write another for me to-morrow. If you are able, bring it over to me; if not, lay it by, and do not look at it, but write another, and another—one every day, and give them all to me the next time I come, which will be soon.

We shall go on that way for a month, and then we shall see something!"

At the end of the month Mr. Wingfold took all the papers and fastened them together in their proper order. Then they read them together, and did indeed see something! The growth of Arthur's observation, both in extent and quality, also the growth of his faculty for narrating what he saw, were remarkable both to himself and his instructor. The number of things and circumstances he was able to see by the end of the month, compared with the number he had seen in the beginning of it, was wonderful; while the mode of his record-had changed from that of a child to that almost of a man.

Mr. Wingfold next, as by that time the weather was quite warm, set him "The task of six o'clock in the evening," when the things that presented themselves to his notice would be very different. After a fortnight, he changed again the hour of his observation, and went on changing it. So that at length the youth who had, twice every day, walked along Cheapside almost without seeing that one face differed from another, knew most of the birds and many of the insects, and could in general tell what they were about, while the domestic animals were his familiar friends. He delighted in the grass and the wild flowers, the sky and the clouds and the stars, and knew, after a real, vital fashion, the world in which he lived. He entered into the life that was going on about him, and so in the house of God became one of the family. He had ten times his former consciousness; his life was ten times the size it was before. As was natural, his health had improved marvellously. There is nothing like interest in life to quicken

the vital forces—the secret of which is, that they are left freer to work.

Richard was rejoiced with the change in him, and reckoned of what he might learn from Arthur in the long days before them; while he in turn would tell him many things he would now be prepared to hear. The soul that had seemed rapidly sinking into the joyless dark was now burning clear as a torch of heaven.

CHAPTER LX.

RICHARD AND HIS FAMILY.

As the dinner hour drew nigh, Richard went to the drawing-room, scrupulously dressed. Lady Ann gave him the coldest of polite recognitions; Theodora was full of a gladness hard to keep within the bounds which fear of her mother counselled; Victoria was scornful, and as impudent as she dared be in the presence of her father; Miss Malliver was utterly wooden, and behaved as if she had never seen him before; Arthur was polite and superior. Things went pretty well, however. Percy, happily, was at Woolwich, pretending to study engineering: of him Richard had learned too much at Oxford.

Theodora and Richard were at once drawn to each other—he prejudiced in her favor by Barbara, she proud of her new, handsome brother. She was a plain, good-natured, good-tempered girl—with red hair, which only her father and mother disliked, and a modest, freckled face, whose smile was genuine and faith-inspiring. Her mother counted her stupid, accepting the judgment of the varnished governess, who saw wonder or beauty or value in nothing her eyes or hands could not reach. Theodora was indeed one of those who, for lack of true teaching, or from the deliberateness of nature, continue children longer than most, but she was not therefore stupid. The aloe takes seven years to blossom, but when it does, its flower may be thirty feet long. Where there is love

there is intellect: at what period it may show itself, matters little. Richard felt he had in her another sister—one for whom he might do something. He talked freely as became him at his father's table, and the conversation did not quite flag. If Lady Ann said next to nothing, she said nearly as much as usual, and was perfectly civil; Arthur was sullen but not rude; Theodora's joy made her talk as she had never talked before. A morn of romance had dawned upon her commonplace life! Vixen gave herself to her dinner, and but the shadow of a grimace now and then reminded Richard of the old monkey-phiz.

Having the heart of a poet, the brain of a scientist, and the hands of a workman—hands, that is, made for making, Richard talked so vitally that in most families not one but all would have been interested; and indeed Arthur too would have enjoyed listening, but that he was otherwise occupied. That he had to look unconcerned at his own deposition, while regarding as an intruder the man whose place he had so long in a sense usurped, was not his sorest trial: regarding as a prig the man who talked about things worth talking about, he could not help feeling himself a poor creature, an empty sack, beside the son of the low-born woman. But indeed Richard, brought face to face with life, and taught to meet necessity with labor, had had immeasurable advantages over Arthur.

The younger insisted to himself that his brother could not have the feelings of a gentleman; that he must have poverty-stricken ways of looking at things. He could, it was true, find nothing in his manners, carriage, or speech, unlike a gentleman, but the vul-

garity must be there, and he watched to find it. For he was not himself a gentleman yet.

When they went to the drawing-room, and Richard had sung a ballad so as almost to make Lady Ann drop a scale or two from her fish-eyes, Arthur went out of the room stung with envy, and not ashamed of it. The thing most alien to the true idea of humanity is the notion that our well-being lies in surpassing our fellows. We have to rise above ourselves, not above our neighbors; to take all the good *of* them not *from* them, and give them all our good in return. That which cannot be freely shared can never be possessed. Arthur went to his room with a gnawing at his heart. Not merely must he knock under to the foundling, but confess that the foundling could do most things better than he—was out of sight his superior in accomplishment as well as education. —"But let us see how he rides and shoots!" he thought.

Even Vixen, who had been saying to herself all the time of dinner, "Mean fellow! to come like a fox and steal poor Arthur's property!"—even she was cowed a little by his singing, and felt for the moment in the presence of her superior.

Sir Wilton was delighted. Here was a son to represent him!—the son of the woman the county had declined to acknowledge! What was Lady Ann's plebeian litter beside this high-bred, modest, self-possessed fellow! He was worthy of his father, by Jove!

He went early to bed, and Richard was not sorry. He too retired early, leaving the rest to talk him over.

How they did it, I do not care to put on record.

Theodora said little, for her heart had come awake with a new and lovely sense of gladness and hope.

"If he would but fall in love with Barbara Wylder!" she thought; "—or rather if Barbara would but fall in love with him, for nobody can help falling in love with her, how happy I should be! they are the two I love best in the world!—next to papa and mamma, of course!" she added, being a loyal girl.

The next morning, Richard came upon Arthur shooting at a mark, and both with pistols and rifle beat him thoroughly. But when Arthur began to talk about shooting pheasants, he found in Richard a rooted dislike to killing. This moved Arthur's contempt.

"Keep it dark," he said; "you'll be laughed at if you don't. My father won't like it."

"Why must a man enjoy himself at the expense of joy?" answered Richard. "I pass no judgment upon your sport. I merely say I don't choose to kill birds. What men may think of me for it is a matter of indifference to me. I think of them much as they think of a Frenchman or an Italian, who shoots larks and blackbirds and thrushes and nightingales: I don't see the *great* difference!"

They strolled into the stable. There stood Miss Brown, looking over the door of her box. She received Richard with glad recognition.

"How comes Miss Brown here?" he asked. "Where can her mistress be?"

"The mare's at home," answered Arthur. "I bought her."

"Oh!" said Richard, and going into the box, lifted her foot, and looked at the shoe. Alas, Miss

Brown had worn out many shoes since Barbara drove a nail in her hoof! Had there been one of hers there, he would have known it—by a pretty peculiarity in the turn of the point back into the hoof, which she called her mark. The mare sniffed about his head in friendly fashion.

"She smells the smithy!" said Arthur to himself.—"Yes; your grandfather's work!" he remarked. "I should be sorry to see any other man shoe horse of mine!"

"So should I!" answered Richard. "—I wonder why Miss Wylder sold Miss Brown!" he said, after a pause.

"I am not so curious!" rejoined Arthur. "She sold her, and I bought her."

Neither divined that the animal stood there a sacrifice to Barbara's love of Richard.

Arthur had given up hope of winning Barbara, but the thought that the bookbinder fellow might now, as he vulgarly phrased it to himself, go in and win, swelled his heart with a yet fiercer jealousy. "I hate him," he said in his heart. Yet Arthur was not a bad fellow as fellows go. He was only a man for himself, believing every man must be for himself, and count the man in his way his enemy. He was just a man who had not begun to stop being a devil.

At breakfast, Lady Ann was almost attentive to her stepson. As it happened they were left alone at the table. Suddenly she addressed him.

"Richard, I have one request to make of you," she said; "I hope you will grant it me!"

"I will if I can," he answered; "but I must not promise without knowing what it is."

"You do not feel bound to please me, I know! I have the misfortune not to be your mother!"

"I feel bound to please you where I can, and shall be more than glad to do so."

"It is a small thing I am going to ask. I should not have thought of mentioning it, but for the terms you seem upon with Mr. Wingfold."

"I hope to see him within an hour or so."

"I thought as much!—Do you happen to remember a small person who came a good deal about the house when you were at work here?"

"If your ladyship means Miss Wylder, I remember her perfectly."

"It is necessary to let you know, and then I shall leave the matter to your good sense, that Mrs. Wylder, and indeed the girl herself at various times, has behaved to me with such rudeness, that you cannot in ordinary decency have acquaintance with them, I mention it in case Mr. Wingfold should want to take you to see them. They are parishioners of his."

"I am sorry I must disappoint you," said Richard.

Lady Ann rose with a gray glitter in her eyes.

"Am I to understand you *intend* calling on the Wylders?" she said.

"I have imperative reasons for calling upon them this very morning," answered Richard.

"I am sorry you should so immediately show your antagonism!" said Lady Ann.

"My obligations to Miss Wylder are such that I must see her the first possible moment."

"Have you asked your father's permission?"

"I have not," answered Richard, and left the room hurriedly.

The next moment he was out of the house: Lady

Ann might go to his father, and he would gladly avoid the necessity of disobeying him the first morning after his return! He did not know how small was her influence with her husband. He took the path across the fields, and ran until he was out of sight of Mortgrange.

CHAPTER LXI.

HEART TO HEART.

WHEN he came to the parsonage, which he had to pass on his way to the Hall, he saw Mr. Wingfold through the open window of the drawing-room, and turned to the door. The parson met him on the threshold.

"Welcome!" he said. "How did you get through your dinner?"

"Better than I expected," replied Richard. "But this morning my stepmother began feeling my mouth: she would have me promise not to call on the Wylders. They had been rude to her, she said."

"Come into the drawing-room. A friend of mine is there who will be glad to see you."

The drawing-room of the parsonage was low and dark, with its two windows close together on the same side. At the farther end stood a lady, seemingly occupied with an engraving on the wall. She did not move when they entered. Wingfold led Richard up to her, then turned without a word, and left the room. Before either knew, they were each in the other's arms.

Barbara was sobbing. Richard thought he had dared too much and had frightened her.

"I couldn't help it!" Barbara said, pleadingly.

"My life has been a longing for you!" said Richard.

"I have wanted you every day!" said Barbara, and began again to sob, but recovered herself with an effort.

"This will never do," she cried, laughing through her tears. "I shall go crazy with having you! And I've not seen you yet! Let me go, please. I want to look at you!"

Richard released her. She lifted a blushing, tearful face to his. But there was only joy, no pain in her tears; only delight, no shame in her blushes. One glance at the simple, manly face before her, so full of the trust that induces trust, would have satisfied any true woman that she was as safe in his thoughts as in those of her mother. She gazed at him one long silent moment.

"How splendid you are!" she cried, like a wild schoolgirl. "How good of you to grow like that! I wish I could see you on Miss Brown!—What are you going to do, Richard?"

While she spoke, Richard was pasturing his eyes, the two mouths of his soul, on the heavenly meadow of her face; and she for very necessity went on talking, that she might not cry again.

"Are you going back to the bookbinding?" she said.

"I do not know. Sir Wilton—my father hasn't told me yet what he wants me to do.—Wasn't it good of him to send me to Oxford?"

"You've been at Oxford then all this time?—I suppose he will make an officer of you now!—Not that I care! I am content with whatever contents you!"

"I dare say he will hardly like me to live by my hands!" answered Richard, laughing. "He would

count it a degradation! There I shall never be able to think like a gentleman!"

Barbara looked perplexed.

"You don't mean to say he's going to treat you just like one of the rest?" she exclaimed.

"I really do not know," answered Richard; "but I think he would hardly enjoy the thought of *Sir Richard Lestrange* over a bookbinder's shop in Hammersmith or Brentford!"

"*Sir* Richard! You do not mean——?"

Her face grew white; her eyes fell; her hand trembled on Richard's arm.

"What is troubling you, dearest?" he asked, in his turn perplexed.

"I can't understand it!" she answered.

"Is it possible you do not know, Barbara?" he returned. "I thought Mr. Wingfold must have told you!—Sir Wilton says I am his son that was lost. Indeed there is no doubt of it!"

"Richard! Richard! believe me I didn't know. Lady Ann told me you were not——!"

"How then should I have dared put my arms round you, Barbara?"

"Richard, I care nothing for what the world thinks! I care only for what God thinks."

"Then, Barbara, you would have married me, believing me base-born?"

"Oh, Richard! you thought it was knowing who you were that made me——! Richard! Richard! I did not think you could have wronged me so! My father sold Miss Brown because I would not marry your brother and be Lady Lestrange. If you had not asked me, and I had been sure it was only because of your birth you wouldn't, I should have

found some way of letting you know I cared no more for that than God himself does. The god of the world is the devil. He has many names, but he's all the same devil, as Mr. Wingfold says.—I wonder why he never told me!—I'm glad he didn't. If he had, I shouldn't be here now!"

"I am very glad too, Barbara; but it wouldn't have made so much difference: I was only here on my way to you! But suppose it had been as you thought, it was one thing what you would do, and another what I would ask you to do!"

"What I would have done was what you should have believed I would do!"

"You must just pardon me, Barbara: well as I thought I knew you, I did not know you enough!"

"You do now?"

"I do."

There came a silence.

"How long have you known this about yourself, Richard?" said Barbara.

"More than four years."

"And you never told me!"

"My father wished it kept a secret for a time."

"Did Mr. Wingfold know?"

"Not till yesterday."

"Why didn't he tell me yesterday, then?"

"I think he wouldn't have told you if he had known all the time."

"Why?"

"For the same reason that made him leave us together so suddenly—that you might not be hampered by knowing it—that we might understand each other before you knew. I see it all now! It was just like him!"

"Oh, he *is* a friend!" cried Barbara. "He knows what one is, and so knows what one is thinking!"

A silent embrace followed, and then Barbara said:

"You must come and see my mother!"

"Hadn't you better tell her first?" suggested Richard.

"She knows—knows what you didn't know—what I've been thinking all the time," rejoined Barbara, with a rosy look of confidence into his eyes.

"She can never have been willing you should marry a tradesman—and one, besides, who——!"

"She knew I would—and that I should have money, else she might not have been willing. I don't say she likes the idea, but she is determined I shall have the man I love—if he will have me," she added, shyly.

"Did you tell her you—cared for me?"

He could not say *loved* yet; he felt an earthy pebble beside a celestial sapphire!

"Of course I did, when papa wanted me to have Arthur!—not till then; there was no occasion! I could not tell what your thoughts were, but my own were enough for that."

Mrs. Wylder was taken with Richard the moment she saw him; and when she heard his story, she was overjoyed, and would scarcely listen to a word about the uncertainty of his prospects. That her Bab should marry the man she loved, and that the alliance should be what the world counted respectable, was enough for her.

When Richard told his father what he had done, saying they had fallen in love with each other while yet ignorant of his parentage, a glow of more than satisfaction warmed Sir Wilton's consciousness. It

was lovely! Lady Ann was being fooled on all sides!

"Richard has been making good use of his morning!" he said at dinner. "He has already proposed to Miss Wylder and been accepted! Richard is a man of action—a practical fellow!"

Lady Ann did perhaps turn a shade paler, but she smiled. It was not such a blow as it might have been, for she too had given up hope of securing her for Arthur. But it was not pleasant to her that the grandchild of the blacksmith should have Barbara's money.

Theodora was puzzled.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE QUARREL.

For a few weeks, things went smoothly enough. Not a jar occurred in the feeble harmony, not a questionable cloud appeared above the horizon. The home-weather seemed to have grown settled. Lady Ann was not unfriendly. Richard, having provided himself with tools for the purpose, bound her prayer-book in violet velvet, with her arms cut out in gold on the cover; and she had not seemed altogether ungrateful. Arthur showed no active hostility, made indeed some little fight with himself to behave as a brother ought to a brother he would rather not have found. Far from inseparable, they were yet to be seen together about the place. Vixen had not once made a face to his face; I will not say she had made none at his back. Theodora and he were fast friends. Miss Malliver, now a sort of upper slave to Lady Ann, cringed to him.

Arthur readily sold him Miss Brown, and every day she carried him to Barbara. But he took the advice of Wingfold, and was not long from home any day, but much at hand to his father's call, who had many things for him to do, and was rejoiced to find him, unlike Arthur, both able and ready. He would even send him where a domestic might have done as well; but Richard went with hearty good will. It gladdened him to be of service to the old man.

Then a rumor reached his father's ears, carried to Lady Ann by her elderly maid, that Richard had been seen in low company; and he was not long in suepecting the truth of the matter.

Not once before since Richard's return, had Sir Wilton given the Mansons a thought, never doubting his son's residence at Oxford must have cured him of a merely accidental inclination to such low company, and made evident to him that recognition of such relationship as his to them was an unheard-of impropriety, a sin against social order, a class-treachery.

Almost every day Richard went to Wylder Hall, he had a few minutes with Alice at the parsonage. Neither Barbara nor her lawless, great-hearted mother, would have been pleased to have it otherwise. Barbara treated Alice as a sister, and so did Helen Wingfold, who held that such service as hers must be recompensed with love, and the money thrown in. There kindness, with her new peace of heart, and plenty of food and fresh air, had made her strong and almost beautiful.

It was Richard's custom to ride over in the morning, but one day it was more convenient for him to go in the evening, and that same evening it happened that Arthur Manson had gone to see his sister. When Richard, on his way back from the Hall, found him at the parsonage, he proposed to see him home: Miss Brown was a good walker, and if Arthur did not choose to ride all the way, they would ride and walk alternately. Arthur was delighted, and they set out in the dusk on foot, Alice going a little way with them. Richard led Miss Brown, and Alice clung joyously to his arm: but for Richard, she

would not have known that human being ever was or could be so happy! The western sky was a smoky red; the stars were coming out; the wind was mild, and seemed to fill her soul with life from the fountain of life, from God himself.

For Alice had been learning from Barbara—not to think things, but to feel realities, the reality of real things—to see truths themselves. Often, when Mrs. Wingfold could spare her, Barbara would take her out for a walk. Then sometimes as they walked she would quite forget her presence, and through that very forgetting Alice learned much. When first she saw Barbara lost in silent joy, and could see nothing to make her look glad, she wondered a moment, then swiftly concluded she must be thinking of God. When she saw her spread out her arms as if to embrace the wind that flowed to meet them, then too she wondered, but presently began to feel what a thing the wind was—how full of something strange and sweet. She began to learn that nothing is dead, that there cannot be a physical abstraction, that nothing exists for the sake of the laws of its phenomena. She did not put it so to herself, I need hardly say; but she was, in a word, learning to feel that the world was alive. Of the three she was the merriest that night as they went together along the quiet road. A little way out of the village, Richard set her on the mare, and walked by her side, leading Miss Brown. Such was the tolerably sufficient foundation for the report that he was seen rollicking with a common-looking lad and a servant girl on the high road, in the immediate vicinity of Wylder Hall.

"He is his father's son!" reflected Lady Ann.

"He's a chip of the old block!" said Sir Wilton to himself. But he did not approve of the openness of the thing. To let such doings be seen was low!

Presently fell an ugly light on the affair.

"By Jove!" he said to himself, "it's that infernal Manson girl! I'll lay my life on it! The fellow is too much of a puritan to flaunt his own foibles in the public eye; but, hang him, he don't love his father enough not to flaunt *his!* Dead and buried, the rascal hauls them out of their graves for men to see! It's all the cursed socialism of his mother's relations! Otherwise the fellow would be all a father could wish! I might have known it! The Armour blood was sure to break out! What business has he with what his father did before he was born! He was nowhere then, the insolent dog! He shall do as I tell him or go about his business—go and herd with the Mansons and all the rest of them if he likes, and be hanged to them!"

He sat in smouldering rage for a while, and then again his thoughts took shape in words, though not in speech.

"How those fools of Wylders will squirm when I cut the rascal off with a shilling, and settle the property on the man the little lady refused! But Dick will never be such a fool! He cannot reconcile his puritanism with such brazen-faced conduct! I shall never make a gentleman of him! He will revert to the original type! It had disappeared in his mother! What's bred in the bone will never out of the flesh!"

Richard was at the moment walking with Mr. Wingfold in the rectory garden. They were speaking of what the Lord meant when he said a man must leave all for him.

As soon as he entered his father's room, he saw that something had gone wrong with him.

"What is it, father?" he said.

"Richard, sit down," said Sir Wilton. "I must have a word with you:—What young man and woman were you walking with two nights ago, not far from Wylder Hall?"

"My brother and sister, sir—the Mansons."

"My God, I thought as much!" cried the baronet, and started to his feet—but sat down again: the fetter of his gout pulled him back. "Hold up your right hand," he went on—Sir Wilton was a magistrate, "and swear, so help you, God, that you will never more in your life speak one word to either of those—persons, or leave my house at once."

"Father," said Richard, his voice trembling a little, "I cannot obey you. To deny my friends and relations, even at your command, would be to forsake my Master. It would be to break the bonds that bind men, God's children, together."

"Hold your cursed jargon! Bonds indeed! Is there no bond between you and your father?"

"Believe me, father, I am very sorry, but I cannot help it. I dare not obey you. You have been very kind to me, and I thank you from my heart,——"

"Shut up, you young hypocrite! you have tongue enough for three!—Come, I will give you one chance more! Drop those persons you call your brother and sister, or I drop you."

"You must drop me, then, father!" said Richard with a sigh.

"Will you do as I tell you?"

"No, sir. I dare not."

"Then leave the house."

Richard rose.

"Good-bye, sir," he said.

"Get out of the house."

"May I not take my tools, sir?"

"What tools, curse you?"

"I got some to bind Lady Ann's prayer-book."

"She's taken him in! By Jove, she's done him, the fool! She's been keeping him up to it, to enrage me and get rid of him!" said the baronet to himself.

"What do you want them for?" he asked, a little calmer.

"To work at my trade. If you turn me out, I must go back to that."

"Damn your soul! it never was, and never will be anything but a tradesman's! Damn *my* soul, if I wouldn't rather make young Manson my heir than you!—No, by Jove, you shall *not* have your cursed tools! Leave the house. You cannot claim a chair-leg in it!"

Richard bowed, and went; got his hat and stick; and walked from the house with about thirty shillings in his pocket.

His heart was like a lump of lead, but he was nowise dismayed. He was in no perplexity how to live. Happy the man who knows his hands the gift of God, the providers for his body! I would in especial that teachers of righteousness were able, with St. Paul, to live by their hands!

Outside the lodge-gate he paused, and stood in the middle of the road thinking. Thus far he had seen his way, but no farther. To which hand must he turn? Should he go to his grandfather, or to Barbara?

He set out, plodding across the fields, for Wylder Hall. There was no Miss Brown for him now.

Miss Wylder, they told him, was in the garden.

She sat in a summer-house, reading a story. When she heard his step, she knew, from the very sound of it, that he was discomposed. Never was such a creature for interpreting the signs of the unseen! Her senses were as discriminating as those of wild animals that have not only to find life but to avoid death by the keenness of their wits. She came out, and met him in the dim green air under a wide-spreading yew.

"What is the matter, Richard?" she said, looking in his face with anxiety. "What has gone wrong?"

"My father has turned me out."

"Turned you out?"

"Yes. I must swear never to speak another word to Alice or Arthur, or go about my business. I went."

"Of course you did!" cried Barbara, lifting her dainty chin an inch higher.

Then, after a little pause, in which she looked with loving pride straight into his eyes—for was he not a man after her own brave big heart!—she resumed:

"Well, it is no worse for you than before, and ever so much better for me!—What are you going to do, Richard?—There are so many things you could turn to now!"

"Yes, but only one I can do well. I might get fellows to coach, but I should have to wait too long—and then I should have to teach what I thought worth neither the time nor the pay. I prefer to live by my hands, and earn leisure for something else."

"I like that," said Barbara. "Will it take you long to get into the way of your old work?"

"I don't think it will," answered Richard; "and I believe I shall do better at it now. I was looking at some of it yesterday morning, and was surprised I should have been pleased with it. In myself growing, I have grown to demand better work—better both in idea and execution."

"It is horrid to have you go," said Barbara; "but I will think you up to God every day, and dream about you every night, and read about you every book. I will write to you, and you will write to me —and—and"—she was on the point of crying, but would not—"and then the old smell of the leather and the paste will be so nice!"

She broke into a merry laugh, and the crisis was over.

They walked together to the smithy.

Fierce was the wrath of the blacksmith. But for the presence of Barbara, he would have called his son-in-law ugly names. His anger soon subsided, however, and he laughed at himself for spending indignation on such a man.

"I might have known him by this time!" he said. "—But just let him come near the smithy!" he resumed, and his eyes began to flame again. "He shall know, if he does, what a blacksmith thinks of a baronet!—What are you going to do, my son?"

"Go back to my work."

"Never to that old-wife trade?" cried the blacksmith. "Look here, Richard!" he said, and bared his upper arm, "there's what the anvil does!" Then he bent his shoulders, and began to wheeze. "And there's what the bookbinding does!" he continued. "No, no; you turn in with me, and we'll show them a sight!—a gentleman that can make his living with

his own hands! The country shall see Sir Wilton Lestrange's heir a blacksmith because he wouldn't be a snob and deny his own flesh and blood!—'I saw your son to-day, Sir Wilton—at the anvil with his grandfather! What a fine fellow he do be! Lord, how he do make the sparks fly!'—If I had him, the old sinner, he should see sparks that came from somewhere else than the anvil!—You turn in with me, Richard, and do work fit for a man!"

"Grandfather," answered Richard, "I couldn't do your work so well as my own."

"Yes, you could. In six weeks you'll be a better smith than ever you'd be a bookbinder. There's no good or bad in that sort of soft thing! I'll make you a better blacksmith than myself. There! I can't say fairer!"

"But don't you think it better not to irritate my father more than I must? I oughtn't to torment him. As long as I was here he would fancy me braving him. When I am out of sight, he may think of me again and want to see me—as Job said his maker would."

"I don't remember," said Barbara. "Tell me."

"He says to God—I was reading it the other day—'I wish you would hide me in the grave till you've done being angry with me! Then you would want to see again the creature you had made; you would call me, and I would answer!' God's not like that, of course, but my father might be. There is more chance of his getting over it, if I don't trouble him with sight or sound of me."

"Well, perhaps you're right!" said Simon. "Off with you to your woman's work! and God bless you!"

CHAPTER LXIII.

BARONET AND BLACKSMITH.

RICHARD took Barbara home, and the same night started for London. Barbara prayed him to take what money she had, but he said that by going in the third class he would have something over, and, once there, would begin to earn money immediately.

His aunt was almost beside herself for lack of outlet to her surprise and delight at seeing him. When she heard his story, however, it was plain she took part with his father, though she was too glad to have her boy again to say so. His uncle too was sincerely glad. His work had not been the same thing to him since Richard went; and to have him again was what he had never hoped. He could not help a grudge that Richard should lose his position for the sake of such as the Mansons, but he saw now the principle involved. He saw too that, in virtue of his belief in God as the father of all, his nephew had much the stronger sense of the claim of man upon man.

Richard never disputed with his uncle; he but suggested, and kept suggesting—in the firm belief that an honest mind must, sooner or later, open its doors to every truth.

He settled to his work as if he had never been away from it, and in a fortnight or so could work faster and better than before. Soon he had as much

in his peculiar department as he was able to do, for almost all his old employers again sought him His story being now no secret, they wondered he should return to his trade, but no one thought he had chosen to be a workman because he was not a gentleman.

But how changed was the world to him since the time that looked so far away! With how much larger a life in his heart would he now sit in the orchestra while the gracious forms of music filled the hall, and he seemed to see them soaring on the pinions of the birds of God, as Dante calls the angels, or sweeping level in dance divine, like the six-winged serpents of Isaiah's vision high and lifted up —all the interspaces filled with glow-worms and little spangled snakes of coruscating sound! He was more blessed now than even when but to lift his eyes was to see the face of Barbara: she was in his faith and hope now as well as in his love.

He had the loveliest of letters from her. She insisted he should not write oftener than once for her twice: his time was worth more, she said, than twice hers. Mr. Wingfold wrote occasionally, and Richard always answered within a week.

As soon as his son was gone, Sir Wilton began to miss him. He wished, first, that the obstinacy of the rascal had not made it necessary to give him quite so sharp a lesson; he wished, next, that he had given him time to see the reasonableness of his demand; and at length, as the days and weeks passed, and not a whisper of prayer entered the ears of the family-Baal, he began to wish that he had not sent him away. The desire to see him grew a longing; his need of him became imperative. Arthur, who now tried a little to do the work he had before

declined, was the poorest substitute for Richard; and his father kept thinking how differently Richard had served him. He repented at last as much as was possible to him, and wished he had left the rascal to take his own way. He tried to understand how it was that, anxious always to please him, he yet would not in such a trifle, and that with nothing to gain and everything to lose by his obstinacy. There might be conscience in it! his mother certainly had a conscience! But how could the fool make the Mansons a matter of *his* conscience? They were no business of his!

He pretended to himself that he had been born without a conscience. At the same time he knew very well there were pigeon-holes in his memory he preferred not searching in; knew very well he had done things which were wrong, things he knew to be wrong when he did them. If he had ever done a thing because he ought to do it; if he had ever abstained from doing a thing because he ought not to do it, he would have *known* he had a conscience. Because he did not obey his conscience, he would rather believe himself without one. I doubt if consciousness ever exists without conscience, however poorly either may be developed.

For the first time in his life he was possessed with a good longing—namely, for his son; a fulcrum was at length established which might support leverage for his uplifting. He grew visibly grayer, stooped more, and became very irritable. Twenty times a day he would be on the point of sending for Richard, but twenty times a day his pride checked him.

"If the rascal would make but apology enough to satisfy a Frenchman, I would take him back!" he

would say to himself over and over; "but he's such a chip of the old block!—so infernally independent!—Well, I don't call it a great fault! If I had had a trade, I should have been just as independent of my father! No, I want no apology from him! Let him just say, 'Mayn't I come back, father?' and the gold ring and the wedding garment shall be out for him directly!"

A month after Richard's expulsion, the baronet drove to the smithy, and accused Simon of causing all the mischief. He must send the boy Manson away, he said: he would settle an annuity on the beggar. That done, Richard must make a suitable apology, and he would take him back.

Simon listened without a word. He wanted to see how far he would go.

"If you will not oblige me," he ended, "you shall not have another stroke of work from Mortgrange, and I will use my influence to drive you from the county."

Without waiting for an answer, he turned to walk from the shop. But he did not walk. The moment he turned, Simon took him by the shoulders and ran him right out of the smithy up to his carriage, into which, for the footman had made haste to open the door, he would have tumbled him neck and heels, but that, gout and all, Sir Wilton managed to spring on the step, and get in without falling. In a rage by no means unnatural, he called to the coachman to send his lash about the ruffian's ears. Simon burst into a guffaw, which so startled the horses that the footman had to run to their heads. In his haste to do so, he failed to shut the door properly; it opened and banged, swinging this way and that, as the horses now reared, now backed, now pulled, and the bar-

onet, cursing and swearing, was tossed about in his carriage like a dried-up kernel in a nut. Simon at length, with tears of merriment running down his red cheeks, managed, in a succession of gymnastics, to close the door.

"Home, Peterkin!" he shouted, and turning away, strode back to his forge, whence immediately sprang upon the air the merriest tune ever played by anvil and hammer with a horse-shoe between them—the sparks flying about the musician like a nimbus of embodied notes. It seemed to soothe the horses, for they started immediately without further racket.

Before the next month was over, the baronet was again in the smithy—in a better mood this time. He made no reference to his former ignominious dismissal—wanted only to know if Simon had heard from his grandson. The old man answered that he had: he was well, happy, and busy. Sir Wilton gave a grunt.

"Why didn't he stay and help you?"

"I begged him to do so," answered Simon, "for he is almost as good at the anvil, and quite as good at the shoeing as myself; but he said it would annoy his father to have him so near, and he wouldn't do it."

His boy's good will made the baronet fidget and swear to hide his compunction. But his evil angel got the upper hand.

"The rascal knew," he cried, "that nothing would annoy me so much as have him go back to his mire like the washed sow!"

Perceiving Simon look dangerous, he turned with a hasty good-morning, and made for his carriage, casting more than one uneasy glance over his shoulder. But the blacksmith let him depart in peace.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE BARONET'S FUNERAL.

It was about a year after Richard's return to his trade, when one morning the doctor at Barset was roused by a groom, his horse all speckled with foam, who, as soon as he had given his message, galloped to the post-office, and telegraphed for a well-known London physician. A little later, Richard received a telegram: "Father paralyzed. Will meet first train. Wingfold."

With sad heart he obeyed the summons, and found Wingfold at the station.

"I have just come from the house," he said. "He is still insensible. They tell me he came to himself once, just a little, and murmured *Richard*, but has not spoken since."

"Let us go to him!" said Richard.

"I fear they will try to prevent you from seeing him."

"They shall not find it easy."

"I have a trap outside."

"Come along."

They reached Mortgrange, and stopped at the lodge. Richard walked up to the door.

"How is my father?" he asked.

"Much the same, sir, I believe."

"Is it true that he wanted to see me?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Is he in his own room?"

"Yes, sir; but, I beg your pardon, sir," said the man, "I have my lady's orders to admit no one!"

While he spoke, Richard passed him, and went straight to his father's room, which was on the ground-floor. He opened the door softly, and entered. His father lay on the bed, with the Barset surgeon and the London doctor standing over him. The latter looked round, saw him, and came to him.

"I gave orders that no one should be admitted," he said, in a low stern tone.

"I understand my father wished to see me!" answered Richard.

"He cannot see you."

"He may come to himself any moment!"

"He will never come to himself," returned the doctor.

"Then why keep me out?" said Richard.

The eyes of the dying man opened, and Richard received his last look. Sir Wilton gave one sigh, and death was past. Whether life was come, God only, and those who watched on the other side, knew.

Lady Ann came in.

"The good baronet is gone!" said the physician.

She turned away. Her eyes glided over Richard as if she had never before seen him. He went up to the bed, and she walked from the room.

When Richard came out, he found Wingfold where he had left him, and got into the pony-carriage beside him. The parson drove off.

"His tale is told," said Richard, in a choking voice. "He did not speak, and I cannot tell whether he knew me, but I had his last look, and that is something. I would have been a good son to him if he had let me—at least I would have tried to be."

He sat silent, thinking what he might have done for him. Perhaps he would not have died if he had been with him, he thought.

"It is best," said Wingfold. "We cannot say anything *would be* best, but we must say everything *is* best."

"I think I understand you," said Richard. "But oh how I would have loved him if he would have let me!"

"And how you will love him!" said Wingfold, "for he will love you. They are getting him ready to let you now. I think he is loving you in the darkness. He had begun to love you long before he went. But he was the slave of the nature he had enfeebled and corrupted. I hope endlessly for him —though God only knows how long it may take, even after the change is begun, to bring men like him back to their true selves.—But surely, Richard," he cried, bethinking himself, and pulling up his ponies, "your right place is at Mortgrange—at least so long as what is left of your father is lying in the house!"

"Yes, no doubt! and I did think whether I ought not to assert myself, and remain until my father's will was read; but I concluded it better to avoid the possibility of anything unpleasant. I cannot of course yield my right to be chief mourner. I think my father would not wish me to do so."

"I am sure he would not.—Then, till the funeral, you will stay with us!" concluded the parson, as he drove on.

"No, I thank you," answered Richard; "I must be at my grandfather's. I will go there when I have seen Barbara."

On the day of the funeral no one disputed Richard's

right to the place he took, and when it was over, he joined the company assembled to hear the late baronet's will. It was dated ten years before, and gave the two estates of Mortgrange and Cinqmer to his son, Arthur Lestrange. There was in it no allusion to the possible existence of a son by his first wife.

Richard rose. The lawyer rose also.

"I am sorry, Sir Richard," he said, "that we can find no later will. There ought to have been some provision for the support of the title."

"My father died suddenly," answered Richard, "and did not know of my existence until about five years ago."

"All I can say is, I am very sorry."

"Do not let it trouble you," returned Richard. "It matters little to me; I am independent."

"I am very glad to hear it. I had imagined it otherwise."

"A man with a good trade and a good education must be independent!"

"Ah, I understand!—But your brother will, as a matter of course—. I shall talk to him about it. The estate is quite equal to it."

"The estate shall not be burdened with me," said Richard with a smile. "I am the only one of the family able to do as he pleases."

"But the title, Sir Richard!"

"The title must look after itself. If I thought it in the smallest degree dependent on money for its dignity, I would throw it in the dirt. If it means anything, it means more than money, and can stand without it. If it be an honor, please God, I shall keep it honorable. Whether I shall set it over my shop, remains to be considered.—Good-morning!"

As he left the room a servant met him with the message that Lady Ann wished to see him in the library.

Cold as ever, but not colder than always, she poked her long white hand at him.

"This is awkward for you, Richard," she said, "but more awkward still for Arthur. Mortgrange is at your service until you find some employment befitting your position. You must not forget what is due to the family. It is a great pity you offended your father."

Richard was silent.

"He left it therefore in my hands to do as I thought fit. Sir Wilton did not die the rich man people imagined him, but I am ready to place a thousand pounds at your disposal."

"I should be sorry to make the little he has left you so much less," answered Richard.

"As you please," returned her ladyship.

"I should like to have just a word with my sister Theodora," said Richard.

"I doubt if she will see you.—Miss Malliver, will you take Mr. Tuke to the schoolroom, and then inquire whether Miss Lestrange is able to leave her room. You will stay with her: she is far from well. —Perhaps you had better go and inquire first. Mr. Tuke will wait you here."

Miss Malliver came from somewhere, and left the room.

Richard felt very angry: was he not to see his father's daughter except in the presence of that woman? But he said nothing.

"There is just one thing," resumed her ladyship, "upon which, if only out of respect to the feelings of

my late husband, I feel bound to insist;—it is, that, while in this neighborhood, you will be careful as to what company you show yourself in. You will not, I trust, pretend ignorance of my meaning, and cause me the pain of having to be more explicit!"

Richard was struck dumb with indignation—and remained dumb from the feeling that he could not condescend to answer her as she deserved. Ere he had half recovered himself, she had again resumed.

"If the title were receded to the property," she said, as if talking to herself, "it might be a matter for more material consideration."

"Did your ladyship address me?" said Richard.

"If you choose to understand what I mean.—But I speak with too much delicacy, I fear. *Compensation* it could be only by courtesy.—Suppose I referred to the court of chancery my grave doubts of your story?"

"My father has acknowledged me!"

"And repudiated;—sent you from the house—left you to pursue your trade—bequeathed you nothing! Everybody knows your father—my late husband, I mean—would risk anything for my annoyance, though, thank God, he dared not attempt to push injury beyond the grave!—he well knew the danger of that! Had he really believed you his son, do you imagine he would have left you penniless? Would he not have been rejoiced to put you over Mr. Lestrange's head, if only to wring the heart of his mother?"

"The proofs that satisfied him remain."

"The testimony, that is, of those most interested in the result—whose very case is a confession of felony!"

"A confession, if you will, that my own aunt was the nurse that carried me away—of which there are proofs."

"Has any one seen those proofs?"

"My father has seen them, Lady Ann."

"You mean Sir Wilton?"

"I do. He accepted them."

"Has he left any document to that effect?"

"Not that I know of."

"Who presented those proofs, as you call them?"

"I told Sir Wilton where they had been hidden, and together we found them."

"Where?"

"In the room that was the nursery."

"Which you occupied for months while working at your trade in the house, and for weeks again before Sir Wilton dismissed you!"

"Yes," answered Richard, who saw very well what she was driving at, but would not seem to understand before she had fully disclosed her intent.

"And where you had opportunity to place what you chose at your leisure!—Excuse me; I am only laying before you what counsel would lay before the court."

"You wish me to understand, I suppose, that you regard me as an impostor, and believe I put the things, for support of my aunt's evidence, where my father and I found them!"

"I do not say so. I merely endeavor to make you see how the court would regard the affair—how much appearances would be against you. At the same time, I confess I have all along had grave doubts of the story. You, of course, may have been deceived as well as your father—I mean the late baronet, my hus-

band; but in any case, I will not admit you to be what you call yourself, until you are declared such by the law of the land. I will, however, make a proposal to you—and no ungenerous one:—Pledge yourself to make no defence, if, for form's sake, legal proceedings should be judged desirable, and in lieu of the possible baronetcy—for I admit the bare possibility of the case, if tried, being given against us—I will pay you five thousand pounds. It would cost us less to try the case, no doubt, but the thing would at best be disagreeable.—Understand I do not speak without advice!"

"Plainly you do not!" assented Richard. "But," he continued, "let me place one thing before your ladyship: To do as you ask me, would be to indorse your charge against my father, that he acknowledged me, that is, he lied, to give you annoyance! That is enough. But I have the same objection in respect of my uncle and aunt, of whom you propose to make liars and conspirators!"

He turned to the door.

"You will consider it?" said her ladyship in her stateliest yet softest tone.

"I will. I shall continue to consider it the worst insult you could have offered my father, your late husband. Thank God he was my mother's husband first!"

"What am I to understand by that?"

"Whatever your ladyship chooses, except that I will not hold any farther communication with you on the matter."

"Then you mean to dispute the title?"

"I decline to say what I mean or do not mean to do."

Lady Ann rose to ring the bell.

Miss Malliver met Richard in the doorway. He turned.

"I am going to bid Theodora good-bye," he said.

"You shall do no such thing!" cried her ladyship.

Richard flew up the stair, and, believing Miss Malliver had not gone to his sister, went straight to her room.

The moment Theodora saw him, she sprang from the bed where she had lain weeping, and threw herself into his arms. He was the only one who had ever made her feel what a man might be to a woman! He told her he had come to bid her good-bye. She looked wild.

"But you're not going *really*—for altogether?" she said.

"My dear sister, what else can I do? Nobody here wants me!"

"Indeed, Richard, I do!"

"I know you do—and the time will come when you shall have me; but you would not have me live where I am not loved!"

"Richard!" she cried, with a burst of indignation, the first, I fancy, she had ever felt, or at least given way to, "you are the only gentleman in the family!"

Richard laughed, and Theodora dried her eyes. Miss Malliver was near enough to be able to report, and the poor girl had a bad time of it in consequence.

"I will not trouble Arthur," said Richard. "Say good-bye to him for me, and give him my love. Please tell him that, although all I had was my father's, yet, as between him and me, Miss Brown is mine, and I expect him to send her to Wylder Hall. Good-bye again to my dear sister! I leave a bit of

my heart in the house, where I know it will not be trampled on!"

Theodora could not speak. Her only answer was another embrace, and they parted.

Richard went to see Barbara, and found her at the parsonage.

"What an opportunity you have," said Wingfold, "of maintaining before the world the honor of work! The man who makes a thing exist that did not exist, or who sets anything right that had gone wrong, must be more worthy than he who only consumes what exists, or helps things to remain wrong!"

"But," suggested Barbara, with her usual keenness, "are you not now encouraging him to seek the praise of men? To seek it for a good thing, is the more contemptible."

"There is little praise to be got from men for that," said Wingfold; "and I am sure Richard does not seek any. He would help men to see that the man who serves his neighbor, is the man whom the Lord of the universe honors. An idle man, or one busy only for himself, is like a lump of refuse floating this way and that in the flux and reflux of the sewer-tide of the world. Were Richard lord of lands it would be absurd of him to give his life to bookbinding; that would be to desert his neighbor on those lands; but what better can he do now than follow the trade by which he may at once earn his living? To omit the question of possibility,—suppose he read for the bar, would that bring him closer to humanity? Would it be a diviner mode of life? Is it a more honorable thing to win a cause—perhaps for the wrong man—than to preserve an old and valuable book? Will a man rank higher in the kingdom that shall not end,

because he has again and again rendered unrighteousness triumphant? Would Richard's mind be as free in chambers as in the workshop to search into truth, or as keen to suspect its covert? Would he sit closer to the well-springs of thought and aspiration in a barrister's library, than among the books by which he wins his bread?"

With eternity before them, and God at the head and the heart of the universe, Richard and Barbara did not believe in separation any more than in death. He in London and she at Wylder Hall, they were far more together than most unparted pairs.

Wingfold set himself to keep Barbara busy, giving her plenty to read and plenty of work: her waiting should be no loss of time to her if he could help it! Among other things, he set her to teach his boy where she thought herself much too ignorant: he held, not only that to teach is the best way to learn, but that the imperfect are the best teachers of the imperfect. He thought this must be why the Lord seems to regard with so much indifference the many falsehoods uttered of and for him. When a man, he said, agonized to get into other hearts the thing dear to his own, the false intellectual or even moral forms in which his ignorance and the crudity of his understanding compelled him to embody it, would not render its truth of none effect, but might, on the contrary, make its reception possible where a truer presentation would stick fast in the doorway.

He made Richard promise to take no important step for a year without first letting him know. He was anxious he should have nothing to undo because of what the packet committed to his care might contain.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE PACKET.

THE day so often in Wingfold's thought arrived at last—the anniversary of the death of Sir Wilton. He rose early, his mind anxious, and his heart troubled that his mind should be anxious, and set out for London by the first train. Arrived, he sought at once the office of Sir Wilton's lawyer, and when at last Mr. Bell appeared, begged him to witness the opening of the packet. Mr. Bell broke the seal himself, read the baronet's statement of the request he had made to Wingfold, and then opened the inclosed packet.

"A most irregular proceeding!" he exclaimed—as well he might: his late client had committed to the keeping of the clergyman of another parish the will, signed and properly witnessed, which Mr. Bell had last drawn up for him, and of which, as it was nowhere discoverable, he had not doubted the destruction! Here it was, devising and bequeathing his whole property, real and personal, exclusive only of certain legacies of small account, to Richard Lestrange, formerly known as Richard Tuke, reputed son of John and Jane Tuke, born Armour, but in reality sole son of Wilton Arthur Lestrange, of Mortgrange and Cinqmer, Baronet, and Robina Armour his wife, daughter of Simon Armour, Blacksmith, born in lawful wedlock in the house of Mortgrange,

in the year 18—!—and so worded, at the request of Sir Wilton, that even should the law declare him supposititious, the property must yet be his!

"This will be a terrible blow to that proud woman!" said Mr. Bell. "You must prepare her for the shock!"

"Prepare Lady Ann!" exclaimed Wingfold. "Believe me, she is in no danger! An earthquake would not move her."

"I must see her lawyer at once!" said Mr. Bell, rising.

"Let me have the papers, please," said Wingfold. "Sir Wilton did not tell me to bring them to you. I must take them to Sir Richard."

"Then you do not wish me to move in the matter?"

"I shall advise Sir Richard to put the affair in your hands; but he must do it; I have not the power."

"You are very right. I shall be here till five o'clock."

"I hope to be with you long before that!"

It took Wingfold an hour to find Richard. He heard the news without a word, but his eyes flashed, and Wingfold knew he thought of Barbara and his mother and the Mansons. Then his face clouded.

"It will bring trouble on the rest of my father's family!" he said.

"Not upon all of them," returned Wingfold; "and you have it in your power to temper the trouble. But I beg you will not be hastily generous, and do what you may regret, finding it for the good of none."

"I will think well before I do anything," answered Richard. "But there may be another will yet!"

"Of course there may! No one can tell. In the

meantime we must be guided by appearances. Come with me to Mr. Bell."

"I must see my mother first."

He found her ironing a shirt for him, and told her the news. She received them quietly. So many changes had got both her and Richard into a sober way of expecting. And yet here was accomplished the very thing for which Jane Tuke had lived and hoped all these years. Her sister—despised and unloved by the man who had given her his name but not his heart—was avenged. The pride of Lady Ann, whom from that first icy interview Jane had hated as she had feared, would have its downfall and the reward of virtue, so often delayed in the world, at last would come. Jane would have been more than mortal had she not secretly rejoiced at this new development of affairs, and yet she was quiet.

They went to Mr. Bell, and Richard begged him to do what he judged necessary. Mr. Bell at once communicated with Lady Ann's lawyer, and requested him to inform her ladyship that Sir Richard would call upon her the next day.

Mr. Wingfold accompanied him to Mortgrange. Lady Ann received them with perfect coolness.

"You are, I trust, aware of the cause of my visit, Lady Ann?" said Richard.

"I am."

"May I ask what you propose to do?"

"That, excuse me, is my affair. It lies with me to ask you what provision you intend making for Sir Wilton's family."

"Allow me, Lady Ann, to take the lesson you have given me, and answer, that is my affair."

She saw she had made a mistake.

"For my part," she returned, "I should not object to remaining in the house, were I but assured that my daughters should be in no danger of meeting improper persons."

"It would be no pleasure, Lady Ann, to either of us to be so near the other. Our ways of thinking are too much opposed. I venture to suggest that you should occupy your jointure-house."

"I will do as I see fit."

"You must find another home."

Lady Ann left the room, and the next week the house, betaking herself to her own, which was not far off, in the park at Cinqmer, the smaller of the two estates.

The week following, Richard went to see Arthur.

"Now, Arthur," he said, "let us be frank with each other! I am not your enemy. I am bound to do the best I can for you all.

"When you thought the land was yours, I had a trade to fall back upon. Now that the land proves mine, you have no trade, or other means of making a livelihood. If you will be a brother, you will accept what I offer: I will make over to you for your life-time, but without power to devise it, this estate of Cinqmer, burdened with the payment of five hundred a year to your sister Theodora till her marriage."

Arthur was glad of the gift, yet did not accept it graciously. The disposition is no rare one that not only gives grudgingly, but receives grudgingly. The man imagines he shields his independence by not seeming pleased. To show yourself pleased is to confess obligation! Do not manifest pleasure, do

not acknowledge favor, and you keep your freedom like a man!

"I cannot see," said Arthur, "—of course it is very kind of you, and all that! you wouldn't have compliments bandied between brothers!—but I should like to know why the land should not be mine to leave. I might have children, you know!"

"And I might have more children!" laughed Richard. "But that has nothing to do with it. The thing is this: the land itself I could give out and out, but the land has the people. God did not give us the land for our own sakes only, but for theirs too. The men and women upon it are my brothers and sisters, and I have to see to them. Now I know that you are liked by our people, and that you have claims to be liked by them, and therefore believe you will consider them as well as yourself or the land—though at the same time I shall protect them with the terms of the deed. But suppose at your death it should go to Percy! Should I not then feel that I had betrayed my people, a very Judas of landlords? Never fellow-creature of mine will I put in the danger of a scoundrel like him!"

"He is my brother!"

"And mine. I know him; I was at Oxford with him! Not one foothold shall he ever have on land of mine! When he wants to work, let him come to me—not till then!"

"You will not say that to my mother?"

"I will say nothing to your mother.—Do you accept my offer?"

"I will think over it."

"Do," said Richard, and turned to go.

"Will you not settle something on Victoria?" said Arthur.

"We shall see what she turns out by the time she is of age! I don't want to waste money!"

"What do you mean by wasting money?"

"Giving it where it will do no good."

"God gives to the bad as well as the good!"

"It is one thing to give to the bad, and another to give where it will do no good. God knows the endless result; I should know by the first link of its chain. I must act by the knowledge granted me. God may give money in punishment: should I dare do that?"

"Well, you're quite beyond me!"

"Never mind, then. What you and I have to do is to be friends, and work together. You will find I mean well!"

"I believe you do, Richard; but we don't somehow seem to be in the same world."

"If we are true, that will not keep us apart. If we both work for the good of the people, we must come together."

"To tell you the truth, Richard, knowing you had given me the land, I could not put up with interference. I am afraid we should quarrel, and then I should seem ungrateful."

"What would you say to our managing the estates together for a year or two? Would not that be the way to understand each other?"

"Perhaps. I must think about it."

"That is right. Only don't let us begin with suspicion. You did me more than one kindness not knowing I was your brother! And you sent back Miss Brown!"

"That was mere honesty."

"Strictly considered, it was more. My father had a right to take the mare from me, and at his death she came into your possession. I thank you for sending her to Barbara."

Arthur turned away.

"My dear fellow," said Richard, "Barbara loved me when I was a bookbinder, and promised to marry me thinking me base-born. I am sorry, but there is no blame to either of us. I had my bad time then, and your good time is, I trust, coming. I did nothing to bring about the change. I did think once whether I had not better leave all to you, and keep to my trade; but I saw that I had no right to do so, because duties attended the property which I was better able for than you."

"I believe every word you say, Richard! You are nobler than I."

CHAPTER LXVI.

BARBARA'S DREAM.

MR. WYLDER could not well object to Sir Richard Lestrange on the ground that his daughter had loved him before she or her father knew his position the same he was coveting for her; and within two months they were married. Lady Ann was invited but did not go to the wedding; Arthur, Theodora, and Victoria did; Percy was not invited.

Neither bride nor bridegroom seeing any sense in setting out on a journey the moment they were free to be at home together, they went straight from the church to Mortgrange.

When they entered the hall which had so moved Richard's admiration the first time he saw it, he stood for a moment lost in thought. When he came to himself, Barbara had left him; but ere he had time to wonder, such a burst of organ music filled the place as might have welcomed one that had overcome the world. He stood entranced for a minute, then hastened to the gallery, where he found Barbara at the instrument.

"What!" he cried in astonishment; "you, Barbara! you play like that!"

"I wanted to be worth something to you, Richard."

"Oh, Barbara, you are a queen at giving! I was well named, for you were coming! I *am* Richard indeed!—oh, so rich!"

In the evening they went out into the park. The moon was rising. The sunlight was not quite gone. Her light mingled with the light that gave it her.

"Do you know that lovely passage in the Book of Baruch?" asked Richard.

"What book is that?" returned Barbara. "It can't be in the Bible, surely?"

"It is in the Apocrypha—which is to me very much in the Bible! I think I can repeat it. I haven't a good memory, but some things stick fast."

But in the process of recalling it, Richard's thoughts wandered, and Baruch was forgotten.

"This dying of Apollo in the arms of Luna," he said, "this melting of the radiant god into his own pale shadow, always reminds me of the poverty-stricken, wasted and sad, yet lovely Elysium of the pagans: so little consolation did they gather from the thought of it, that they longed to lay their bodies, not in the deep, cool, far-off shadow of grove or cave, but by the ringing roadside, where live feet, in two meeting, mingling, parting tides, ever came and went; where chariots rushed past in hot haste, or moved stately by in jubilant procession; where at night lonely forms would steal through the city of the silent, with but the moon to see them go, bent on ghastly conference with witch or enchanter; and——"

"Where *are* you going, Richard? Please take me with you. I feel as if I were lost in a wood!"

"What I meant to say," replied Richard, with a little laugh, "was—how different the moonlit shadow land of those people from the sunny realm of the radiant Christ! Jesus rose again because he was true, and death had no part in him. This world's

more hath filled it with four-footed beasts: he that sendeth forth light, and it goeth, calleth it *again*, and it obeyeth him with fear. The stars shined in their watches, and rejoiced: when he calleth them, they say, Here we be; and so with cheerfulness they showed light unto him that made them. This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of him.'"

"That is beautiful!" cried Barbara. "'They said, Here we be! And so—'—What is it?"

"'And so with cheerfulness they showed light unto him that made them.'"

"I will read every word of Baruch!" said Barbara. "Is there much of him?"

"No; very little."

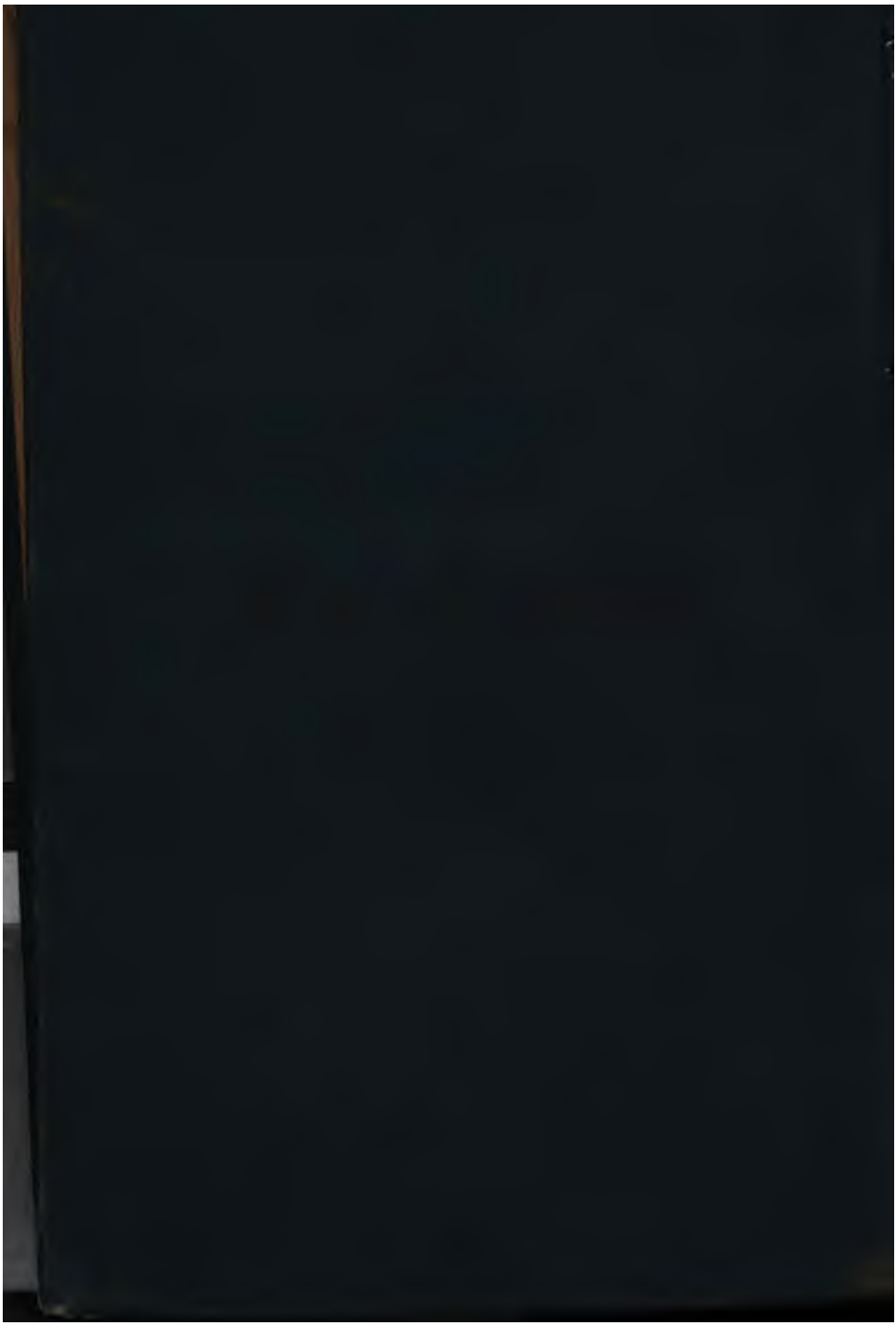
A silence followed. Then again Barbara spoke, and she clung a little closer to her husband.

"I want to tell you something that came to me one night when we were in London," she said. "It was a miserable time that—before I found you up in the orchestra there! and then hell became purgatory, for there was hope in it. I saw so many miserable things! I seemed always to come upon the miserable things. It was as if my eyes were made only to see miserable things—bad things and suffering everywhere. The terrible city was full of them. I longed to help, but had to wait for you to set me free. You had gone from my knowledge, and I was very sad, seeing nothing around me but a waste of dreariness. I keep asking God to give me patience, and not let me fancy myself alone. But the days were dismal, and the balls and dinners frightful. I seemed in a world without air. The girls were so silly, the men so inane, and the things they said so mawkish

and colorless! Their compliments sickened me so, that I was just hungry to hide myself. But at last came what I want to tell you.

"One morning, after what seemed a long night's dreamless sleep, I awoke; but it was much too early to rise; so I lay thinking—or more truly, I hope, being thought into, as Mr. Wingfold says. Many of the most beautiful things I had read, scenes of our Lord's life on earth, and thoughts of the Father, came and went. I had no desire to sleep again, or any feeling of drowsiness; but in the midst of fully conscious thought, found myself in some other place, of which I only knew that there was firm ground under my feet, and a soft white radiance of light about me. The remembrance came to me afterwards, of branches of trees spreading high overhead, through which I saw the sky; but at the time I seemed not to take notice of what was around me. I was leaning against a form tall and grand, clothed from the shoulders to the ground in a black robe, full, and soft and fine. It lay in thickly gathered folds, touched to whiteness in the radiant light, all along the arms encircling, without at first touching me.

"With sweet content my eyes went in and out of those manifold radiant lines, feeling, though they were but parts of his dress, yet they were of himself; for I knew the form to be that of the heavenly Father, but felt no trembling fear, no sense of painful awe—only a deep, deep worshipping, an unutterable love and confidence. 'Oh Father!' I said, not aloud, but low into the folds of his garment. Scarcely had I breathed the words, when 'My child!' came whispered, and I knew his head was bent toward me, and I felt his arms close round my shoulders, and the folds

of his garment enwrap me, and with a soft sweep, fall behind me to the ground. Delight held me still for a while, and then I looked up to seek his face; but I could not see past his breast. His shoulders rose far above my upreaching hands. I clasped them together, and face and hands rested near his heart, for my head came not much above his waist.

"And now came the most wonderful part of my dream. As I thus rested against his heart, *I seemed to see into it;* and mine was filled with loving wonder, and an utterly blessed feeling of home, to the very core. I was *at home*—with my Father! I looked, as it seemed, into a space illimitable and fathomless, and yet a warm light as from a hearth-fire shone and played in ruddy glow, as upon confining walls. And I saw, there gathered, all human hearts. I saw them—yet I saw no forms; they *were* there—and yet they *would be* there. To my waking reason, the words sound like nonsense, and perplex me; but the thing did not perplex me at all. With light beyond that of faith, for it was of absolute certainty, clear as bodily vision, but of a different nature, I saw them. But this part of my dream, the most lovely of all, I can find no words to describe; nor can I even recall to my own mind the half of what I felt. I only know that something was given me then, some spiritual apprehension, to be again withdrawn, but to be given to us all, I believe, some day, out of his infinite love, and withdrawn no more. Every heart that had ever ached, or longed, or wandered, I knew was there, folded warm and soft, safe and glad. And it seemed in my dream that to know this was the crown of all my bliss—yes, even more than to be myself in my Father's arms. Awake, the thought of multitude had